



Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Arab League Chief Hopes Arab-Israeli Negotiations To Resume

NC0105151096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1445 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 May (MENA) — Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Isamat 'Abd-al-Majid has expressed his hope that the coming phase of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza will succeed and eventually lead to the full implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy on the basis of the land-for-peace principle and the establishment of the Palestinian state and its capital, Jerusalem.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid told MENA that there is a big chance for success in view of the important development in the official position of both sides. This development is the formulation of a new Palestinian national charter that agrees with the requirements of the phase of peace and the revocation of the Israeli Labor Party's objection to the setting up of a Palestinian state.

The Arab League secretary general expressed the hope that negotiations will be resumed along the Syrian and Lebanese tracks as soon as possible. He reiterated peace as the Arab strategic choice as represented in the resolution the Arab League council issued on 12 September 1991 on the basis of implementing the UN resolutions to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Talks With Clinton 'Very Important'

JN0105173296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic
1700 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat held official talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House this evening. Following their meeting, President Yasir 'Arafat expressed extreme satisfaction with the results of his talks with President Clinton. He said the talks were very important and proved the depth of the relations between the National Authority [NA] and the U.S. Administration, something which will bolster and boost the peace process, especially on the Palestinian-Israeli track in light of the approaching Palestinian-Israeli final status negotiations. He said the talks also dealt with extending financial aid to the NA and addressing the economic difficulties caused by the continued Israeli closure.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Addresses National Press Club

JN0105201596 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic
1818 GMT 1 May 96

[News conference by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. on 1 May—recorded from a live CNN report, in Arabic with passage-by-passage translation into English; translated from Arabic; italicized passages in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Arafat] First of all, I am very happy to be visiting this friendly country. I am happy about the warm meeting I had with President Clinton this morning. In fact this warm meeting was also positive, constructive, and useful. I am coming from a tense region, full of events. The events are tense and difficult. These events are also epoch-making, not only for the Middle East but also for the entire world.

You are aware that we have experienced very difficult circumstances during recent days—actually during the last three months [laughter as the interpreter says in English: the last 12 months]. In fact we are facing great challenges, the first of which are the developments taking place around us. The most important of these developments are the Palestinian elections, of which we are proud. The elections were held under international supervision and we are proud of the way they were conducted. These elections demonstrated that our people are committed to peace and that they are determined to pursue the path of peace.

They did not vote only for me, but also for peace. They did not vote only for the Legislative Council, but also for peace. For your information, approximately 84 percent of the electorate participated in the elections. As you can tell, this is a high percentage. As I have said, it was a referendum on the peace process and for the sake of the continuation of peace between us and our Israeli neighbors. Despite this, many and difficult events faced us. It is difficult for me to forget that I lost my partner in the peace process, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, who was a victim of blind terrorism. The challenge that faced Peres and me was how to complete the peace process. We also should say that terrorist operations were directed not only against the Israelis, but also against the Palestinians, and the overall peace process.

Yet, we are determined to go ahead with the peace process. This was proven by the results of our Palestine National Council [PNC] session, which was held in Gaza recently. The voting was not for individuals but for the peace process. I told the president today: I promised you in Sharm al-Shaykh that we would

remove those articles in the Palestinian National Charter that conflicted with the agreement between us and the Israelis and with the exchanged letters.

We also cannot forget the painful events that took place against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples in Lebanon. The Lebanese people, and the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, paid a high price. I said from the beginning that I was against these operations and I called for a quick return to the 1993 agreement. I am happy the mediators once again were able to reach the 1993 formula and to restore a normal situation in Lebanon.

Yet, our people are facing an economic siege, a collective punishment, a closure, and huge sanctions by the other side. For example, 120,000 of our workers lost their jobs. Our exports and imports are also facing serious difficulties. As a result, we sustain a daily loss of more than \$6 million. This is a large amount of money for an emerging state like ours.

We are not an oil-producing country. The occupation completely destroyed our infrastructure. We are starting from below zero. Every aspect of life is affected, the water we drink, electricity, roads, sewers, schools, hospitals — hence the miracle of the PNC vote. The PNC met in Gaza recently in the midst of the troubles and difficulties we are facing; yet, the decision was for peace. Once again, as I said, this proves to everyone of you that our people support the peace of the brave and a just, comprehensive peace in our region. Again, regarding the important meeting I had with his excellency the president today, I would like to thank his excellency for giving me this important and good opportunity to have this productive and positive meeting. The most important point, I believe, is his excellency's approval of the setting up of a U.S.-Palestinian commission to follow up all issues of mutual concern. Besides, he showed understanding of our difficulties, including the economic ones. He promised to exert efforts with all parties, including the donor countries and the World Bank. After this meeting with you, I will head for a meeting with World Bank President Wolfensohn. The United States has a key role in the Middle East peace process. It is one of the two sponsors of the peace process. We do not forget that the Oslo I and Oslo II agreements were signed at the White House. A part of that agreement also was signed in Cairo. The United States has an important role in consolidating the peace process. This is also an international responsibility. It is the responsibility of the international community. Peace is not only a Palestinian demand, but also an Israeli, Arab, and international demand. I do not want to take much of your time. I know you have many questions to ask, but I hope you

will not to squeeze me too much with your questions. [laughter]

[Unidentified correspondent] *Mr. President: What will it take for Israel and Syria to make peace? Does Hafiz al-Asad need to maintain a state of hostility to stay in power?*

[Arafat] Undoubtedly, when we went to Madrid, we went to achieve a comprehensive, lasting, peaceful solution in the whole area — with the Palestinians and the Israelis, with the Jordanians and the Israelis, with the Syrians and Israelis, with the Lebanese and Israelis. For this, we have to strengthen more and more the peace process. And in the same time, we hope that the Syrian track and the Lebanese track will follow up. Maybe it is difficult before the end of the Israeli election, but no doubt it will follow up after that.

Palestinian Affairs: Ambassador on 'Arafat's U.S. Visit, Talks

JN0205090496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic
0400 GMT 2 May 96

[Telephone interview with Hasan 'Abd-al-Rahman, Palestinian ambassador in Washington, by Fathi al-Barqawi in the Jericho studio; from the "A New Day" feature—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Barqawi] We had an appointment with our ambassador in Washington, Hasan 'Abd-al-Rahman, at 0705. We searched for him, and he is now with us. He will tell us where he was. Good morning, Brother Hasan.

[Arafat] Good morning.

[al-Barqawi] You were 12 minutes late. Where were you?

[Arafat] I apologize. I was with the president.

[al-Barqawi] Your apology is accepted, although time is at a premium when one is live on the air. What about the results of President Yasir 'Arafat's visit to Washington. This is a multifaceted visit. How can we describe what has happened during this visit?

[Arafat] This is a very important visit. It is the first visit by President Yasir 'Arafat to the United States. It is a working visit, not a courtesy visit. This is also the first Palestinian-U.S. meeting at the summit level. We should take note of the nature of the topics President 'Arafat and the delegation accompanying him discussed with President Clinton and the U.S. Administration. Many topics were discussed. Some dealt with current issues and others with future issues, particularly the final status negotiations, and the problems the Palestinian

National Authority [PNA] and the Palestinian people encounter. In addition to his meetings with the president and later with the U.S. secretary of state, 'Arafat met with the World Bank president. This meeting dealt with urgent plans to create jobs for Palestinian workers who have been harmed by the Israeli closure and the economic siege. 'Arafat also met with members of Congress, members of the Palestinian community, and prominent U.S. figures.

[Al-Barqawi] You said that current and future issues were discussed during President 'Arafat's meetings with Clinton, in addition to the issue of negotiations. Can you give us more details?

[Abd-al-Rahman] Yes. A Palestinian-U.S. committee, the first of its kind, was established to follow up issues of mutual interest. Presidents 'Arafat and Clinton decided to form this committee. The discussions also dealt with economic issues and the difficulties Palestinian economy faces as a result of the closure. Specific measures to ease the burden of the closure were discussed. In addition, President Clinton promised to do what he can to ease the Israeli measures. President Clinton also promised to try to persuade the donor states and international financial bodies, like the World Bank and the IMF, to establish projects that tackle the unemployment caused by the Israeli closure.

[Al-Barqawi] Can we say that the results are positive and that the visit has been a success, at least in terms of the meetings with the Americans?

[Abd-al-Rahman] This is how we assessed the visit. This is how President Yasir 'Arafat and political observers in Washington assess the visit.

[Al-Barqawi] There is another issue you have not mentioned: the meeting between President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. Although it was a short, 20-minute meeting, this meeting was very important.

[Abd-al-Rahman] Yes. President Yasir 'Arafat met the Israeli prime minister. They discussed several issues. The main issue was that the final status negotiations will begin on schedule — that is, on 5 May, as stipulated in the agreements we signed with Israel. Some pending issues were also discussed, like the issue of female detainees, safe passages, and other issues. These issues were discussed in an atmosphere that I can describe as positive.

[Al-Barqawi] The economic situation was an important topic in the Palestinian-U.S. talks, as well as President 'Arafat's meeting with World Bank President Wolfensohn....

[Abd-al-Rahman, interrupting] An agreement was signed between the World Bank and the PNA under which the World Bank will disburse an additional \$20 million to develop the Palestinian countryside and establish projects that will provide jobs for Palestinians who lost theirs following the closure.

[Al-Barqawi] Has the World Bank set specific conditions for this 20 million?

[Abd-al-Rahman] There are no conditions. These funds will be used to develop the Palestinian countryside, particularly water projects, the construction of agricultural roads, and the maintenance of existing roads in the Palestinian countryside in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

[Al-Barqawi] How do you assess last night's meeting between President 'Arafat and representatives of the U.S. and foreign press at the National Press Club?

[Abd-al-Rahman] The meeting was for President 'Arafat alone. Shim'on Peres did not attend. The meeting took place over lunch at noon today at the invitation of the U.S. National Press Club. During this meeting, President 'Arafat talked about issues of interest to the Palestinian people and the region. He spoke about the peace process, its dimensions, and the repercussions of the Israeli aggression on southern Lebanon, as well as the future challenges we will encounter and how to overcome obstacles.

[Al-Barqawi] My last question. What concerns did the representatives of the Palestinian community raise during their meeting with President Yasir 'Arafat?

[Abd-al-Rahman] The Palestinian community wanted to listen to what President Yasir 'Arafat had to say about a host of issues of interest to our community, particularly with respect to the situation in the homeland and how this community can help the PNA and their kinsfolk in the homeland. The delegation also wanted to express its desire for a link between the Palestinian community and the homeland and the means to establish a permanent and institutionalized relationship between the community and the PNA. The delegation also raised many typical questions that any Palestinian expatriate is expected to raise on Palestinian democracy, the trust between us and the Israelis, and the enhancement of coexistence between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

[Al-Barqawi] There is an overwhelming desire to establish relations with the homeland. In spite of this, we seek \$20 million from the World Bank and other parties. What prevents investments by the Arab community, specifically the Palestinian community, in its homeland, Palestine?

[Abd-al-Rahman] This is the question President 'Arafat posed to the Palestinian community. He asked them to take practical steps to express their emotional, material, moral, and political link to the homeland.

[Al-Barqawi] Brother 'Abd-al-Rahman, thank you and good morning.

[Abd-al-Rahman] Thank you and good morning to you and to our Palestinian people.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinian Arab League Envoy on Final Stage Peace Talks

NC0205105796 *Cairo MENA in English*
1020 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, May 2 (MENA)—The first phase of the final Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, scheduled for Sunday [5 May], is a preparatory round since it is taking place prior to the Israeli national elections, a Palestinian official said today.

Palestine's permanent representative to the Arab League, Muhammad Subayh, told MENA Sunday's round will discuss five main topics, namely security, final boundaries between the Palestinians and the Israelis, Jerusalem, the return of Palestinian refugees, and Jewish settlements.

The timing of this round was decided by the two sides in accordance with their commitment to begin the final phase negotiations by the beginning of May of this year, Subayh said.

Mahmud 'Abbas, member of the PLO Executive Committee, and Yuri Savir, secretary general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, are expected to lead Sunday's round of talks.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Husayni Calls For 'Just' Solution to Jerusalem Issue

JN0105192596 *Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic*
1800 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, member of the PLO Executive Committee and official in charge of the Jerusalem file at the National Authority, stressed the need to arrive at a just and comprehensive solution to the issue of occupied Jerusalem within the final settlement negotiations with Israel. The negotiations will start in Taba on 5 May.

In a statement to Voice of Palestine today, al-Husayni stressed that all the issues related to the peace process are interlinked. He noted the need to arrive at satisfactory solutions and to rally Arab, Islamic, and international support for the Palestinian right to holy Jerusalem, the capital of the independent Palestinian state.

Faysal al-Husayni declared that an official Palestinian delegation will head to sisterly Morocco within the next few days to encourage Palestinian and Arab investors to take part in investments and establish vital projects in Jerusalem within the framework of a comprehensive study prepared for the holy city.

Palestinian Affairs: Planned Hamas Attacks on Israeli Targets Denied

MS0105143296 *Leeds PALESTINE TIMES in English*
Apr 96 p 4

["Exclusive" report on unattributed interview with Muhammad Nazzal, Hamas representative in Jordan, in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Senior Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] official denied that the political leadership of Hamas outside the Occupied Territories planned the recent attacks on Israeli targets in Occupied Jerusalem, Ashkelon and Tel Aviv.

The Hamas Representative in Jordan, Mr. Muhammad Nazzal, told the PT [PALESTINE TIMES] that Izz-al-Din 'al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, was the authority which announced its military operations in Occupied Palestine. The political leadership of Hamas can not announce or speak about such operations except to explain the policies and objectives of Hamas, he said. Mr. Nazzal accused the Palestinian Authority of trying to "export its crisis outside the Occupied Territories by accusing the Hamas leadership abroad of being responsible for these operations. These attacks were planned, supervised, and carried out in the Occupied Territories."

However, Mr. Nazzal pointed out that the external leadership of Hamas plays a political and informational role to defend the Palestinian cause and reiterate the legitimate rights of the Palestinian People. "We practise such activities publicly through our contacts with local and international media and through the meetings with the political powers in Arab and Islamic countries without intervention in the internal affairs or disruption of civil order in these countries," Mr. Nazzal said.

Commenting on Hamas' current position towards military operations against Israel, Mr. Nazzal said the military wing of Hamas selects the proper place and time for its attacks without intervention from the political leadership of Hamas. But he added that there is a general Hamas policy concerning military operations. "Because the forces of occupation are still in the Occupied Territories and there is no political decision to stop or suspend military actions, al-Qassam carried out its recent operations," Hamas' official said.

Answering a question whether Hamas had made an agreement with the Palestinian Authority [PA] when the two parties held talks in Cairo last December, Mr. Nazzal denied such an agreement. "After our discussions in Cairo, we issued a joint statement signed by the heads of the PA and Hamas delegations which included a phrase that Hamas upholds its right to continue military operations as long as the occupation exists," Mr. Nazzal said pointing out that this was a controversial point with the PA.

Commenting on US pressures on Syria to close Hamas offices in Damascus Mr Nazzal denied that Hamas has any offices in Syria. "There are only supporters of Hamas who were deported from their homeland by the Israeli Occupation authorities. They are compelled to stay in Syria because they do not have any other place to go. They can, however, return to their homes if the forces of Occupation reconsider their decision," he said.

The Hamas official described the contradictory statements which followed the recent attacks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv as being falsified by the Palestinian Authority. Wording of those statements was different than al-Qassam's statements, he said. "The military leadership knows that alone it can not make a decision to halt military operations without referring to the political leadership both within and outside the Occupied Territories. It is also not reasonable for the military wing to praise the Palestinian Authority in the manner evident in these statements and accept negotiations with Israel through the PA," Mr. Nazzal said pointing out that Hamas had information from the Occupied Territories confirming this fact. They — the Palestinian Authority — tried to imitate the Hamas style of wording in order to show that there were contradictions and confusion among the ranks of Hamas which was not true he said.

Mr. Nazzal pointed out that a recent statement by Hamas expressed its readiness to discuss any political effort to relieve tension in the area. "But until now, we have not seen any positive response to this offer. Therefore, Hamas' policies regarding the resistance of the occupation have not changed," Mr. Nazzal added.

Commenting on Hamas' conditions for the cessation of its military operations, Mr. Nazzal said "we want the removal of occupation. According to our strategic plans, we shall continue the resistance of the occupation forces as long as they exist." He regretted that the Israeli government met Hamas' past and present initiatives with haughtiness and arrogance. "All of the solutions, as we have seen, are far removed from tackling the essence of the conflict which is the occupation. The real solution to the conflict should be separate from the Oslo accords," he added.

Mr. Nazzal, commenting on the US President's statement which described the recent Hamas bombings as "aimless" said Hamas' goal is very clear — the resistance of the occupation. "They are legitimate attacks approved by all religions and international law. Our people want the forces of occupation to get out of their land, is there an objective clearer than this?" Mr. Nazzal wondered.

As for the Sharm al-Shaykh anti-terror summit held in Egypt last month, the Hamas official said it was an Israeli plot to gather international support to counter the resistance movement which is headed by Hamas. He called on the world not to participate in such things that serve the interests of the Israeli government. "We do not practise acts of terror and reject terrorism that is made by individuals against their societies. We face an occupation and fight for freedom and independence the same as the Algerians fought against the French occupation, the French fought against the Germans and the blacks against racism in South Africa," he added.

Answering a question that some innocents and children were killed in Hamas' attacks, Mr. Nazzal said that Hamas announced from the beginning that it would only target the Israeli soldiers. "This is the rule but the Israelis did not respect it for a single day. All those who are killed from our people are civilians. We see that the majority of the Israelis serve in the army, men and women. Still, Hamas is keen to save souls of children, women and old men. In general we target places in which soldiers gather but sometimes other persons are killed unintentionally," he added. Mr. Nazzal pointed out that the Israeli media concentrates on the civilian victims and ignores the losses and injuries among soldiers.

Meanwhile, Mr. Nazzal accused the Palestinian Authority of launching an unprecedented security campaign not against Hamas only but also a large sector of the Palestinian people which Hamas considers a violation of the agreement reached in Cairo last December. He described the situation in the self rule areas as tense between Hamas and the PA. However, Mr. Nazzal said Hamas is ready to continue the dialogue with the PA because it is "the only way of co-existence between us. We do not choose confrontation as being the alternative resulting in a civil war which we do not want." He added that the PA declared war on Hamas the same as the Israeli authorities did. But appearing as an instrument in the hands of the Occupation forces does not serve the PA interests. "We exert strenuous efforts to avoid confrontation with the PA. But it should know that the Hamas' military body was not affected by the Israeli oppression. It still exists and pressure may cause an explosion of the situation which we do not want," the

Hamas official said. Mr. Nazzal described the alleged relations between Iran and Hamas' military operations as nonsense. "Iran has nothing to do with these operations nor has any other country. Iran has no influence on decisions made by Hamas. It is a pretence to export

the crisis outside the Occupied Territories and to Justify the US campaign against Iran. Such operations do not require any external support," Mr. Nazzal said.

Egypt

Egypt: Musa Departs for Talks With Turkish Officials in Ankara

NC0205084696 *Cairo MENA in Arabic*
0815 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 May (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and his delegation left Cairo this morning for Ankara on a two-day visit to Turkey.

The foreign minister stated upon departure that he will deliver a message from President Husni Mubarak to Turkish President Suleyman Demirel on the regional situation and the Middle East peace process in addition to Egyptian-Turkish relations.

He said he will discuss with the Turkish president, the prime minister, and the ministers of foreign affairs and defense issues relating to regional developments and what has been reported about the Turkish-Israeli military agreements.

Commenting on France making Yemen and Eritrea reach an agreement to go to arbitration [on the Hanish island dispute], 'Amr Musa said he considers this an important achievement in the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute, one that serves regional interests generally and the general trend toward a legal and peaceful solution to end this problem.

Egypt: 'Arafat To Visit Cairo 3 May for Talks With Mubarak

NC0205103096 *Cairo MENA in Arabic*
1005 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 May (MENA)—Informed Palestinian sources in Cairo have revealed that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat will arrive in Cairo Friday [3 May] evening from the United States. During his visit there he met with U.S. President Bill Clinton and discussed developments in the peace process between the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

These sources clarified to MENA that the Palestinian president will inform the Egyptian political leadership of the results of his talks in Washington and his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

It is worth noting that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat met with President Husni Mubarak before heading for Washington at the beginning of this week.

Egypt: Press Denounces U.S.-Israeli Strategic Alliance

NC0205080996 *Cairo MENA in Arabic*
0510 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 May (MENA)—Today's Cairo newspapers call on the Arab countries to work as a team on the diplomatic, information, and intellectual levels to confront the U.S.-Israeli strategic alliance.

In an editorial entitled "U.S. Pampering of Israel...How Long?," AL-AKHBAR says: The U.S. bias in favor of Israel has become an accepted fact about which we can do nothing except try to reduce its negative impact on the Arabs.

The newspaper adds that if the U.S. President has his logical, emotional, and electoral reasons for throwing himself in the lap of Israeli interests in this unprecedented manner, we must say that the United States also has vital interests in the Arab world. Events have proved that the U.S. reliance on Israel alone as a strategic asset in the region is a mistake. During the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, former U.S. President George Bush realized that Israel could not play a significant role in dealing with the most serious political crisis in modern history.

The newspaper says: This is why the devilish Zionist propaganda machine did its work, defeated Bush, brought Clinton to office, and turned the United States into an ally of Israel.

The newspaper says it believes that if Clinton is planning to win a second term in office and is hoping that the climax of his election campaign will be a huge ceremony during which a comprehensive peace agreement will be signed between Israel and its Arab neighbors, we sincerely advise him to show some neutrality in dealing with the Arab countries and to consider Arab rights and the Arab people's wishes.

Concluding, AL-AKHBAR says that Clinton's frequent signing of military, security, and strategic treaties and agreements with Israeli officials does not bode well for the desired peace.

In another comment under the headline "The Obedient Boy," AL-AKHBAR says that never in Israel's history—if it has a history—and never in the 200 years of American history has a U.S. President offered direct or indirect aid to an Israeli Government as Bill Clinton has offered Shim'on Peres' government. Never has a U.S. President dared to reveal his country's collusion with Israel and to shed its fig leaf as the current U.S. President has done. Clinton has involved himself in defending Israel's terrorism and the ugly premeditated massacre the Israeli occupation forces committed

in cold blood against innocent women, children, and old people in Qana in south Lebanon.

Referring to the unprecedented U.S.-Israeli strategic alliance, the newspaper says Clinton has deservedly earned the title the "Obedient Boy of Israel," who does not deny it any request and never tells it no. The title was coined by Nahum Barnea [name as transliterated], a prominent writer in the Israeli newspaper Yedi'ot Aharonot, who said that "Clinton believes in Israel's causes, especially in its current government's causes. Most probably, he will enter Israel's history as the first U.S. President to behave as an obedient boy who does not know how to say no." In a clear reference to the Qana massacre, the writer said that whoever observes relations between the two countries will be amazed by the distance Clinton has covered in defending the killing of so many civilians.

In his daily column in AL-AHRAM, writer Ahmad Bahjat writes under the headline "Funeral" that the entire Lebanese people bade farewell to the victims of the Qana massacre. The Arab and Egyptian people watched video of the funeral in tears. The joy of the feast [of the sacrifice] was subdued by this tragic scene. The bodies of the martyrs finally reached Qana, where a placard was raised that said: "The children of the 1978 Kunin massacre welcome the children of the 1996 Qana massacre. The south will remain."

The writer adds that at the time Shim'on Peres was signing an agreement in Washington under which the Israeli Government will get \$100 million plus advanced weapons to fight terrorism, training missions, and intelligence cooperation.

Concluding, the writer says the only consolation is that God is stronger than all the world's tyrannical forces.

Under the headline "Israeca" [a play on the words Israel and America], AL-AHRAM says: We have long reiterated that Israel is one of the states of the U.S.A. Events have proved that this description is true, despite Israel's claims of sovereignty, independence, and free decision. Recent events, especially the aggression on Lebanon and Washington's support for it, have reaffirmed that Israel is America and America is Israel. This fact will be cemented by the joint defense and strategic agreements between them. The newspaper concludes: Perhaps from now on we should know who we should negotiate with, who we should deal with, and who we should stand against.

Writer Salamah Ahmad Salamah, in his daily column in AL-AHRAM, writes under the headline "The Future of Coexistence" calling on the Arab countries to review their stances. He says that after the destruction caused

by the difficult experience Lebanon has gone through as a result of the Israeli bestiality and violence, now seems to be an opportune moment — in view of the cease-fire agreement — for the Arab world to declare its stance on the accepted facts that have governed its policies in dealings with Israel.

He adds that first among these accepted facts is that the relationship between Israel and any Arab party will always be governed by Israel's views on its security interests without considering the security of others. The military and nuclear superiority that guarantee the quick and effective Israeli deterrent force will always remain the final arbiter in any dispute or problem that crops up between Israel and its neighbors, without considering any peace agreements with others.

He clarified that the second accepted fact is that peace relations with Israel will not guarantee the Arabs better dealings with the United States. The United States' first and final mission will always be to defend Israel's security and presence in the region. Israel will always acquire the necessary military backing to guarantee its qualitative nuclear superiority in the form of international political support, military supplies, strategic agreements, and advanced weapons.

Under the headline "The U.S.-Israeli Alliance...Constants and Variables," AL-AHRAM says in an article on the "Issues and Opinions" page that, ultimately, our stance as Arabs on this alliance and how to deal with the facts behind it and its developments remains unchanged. It is no longer useful to merely reject the policies of alliances and axes or to take reactionary stances.

The paper adds: Arab diplomacy, Arab media, and Arab political thought desperately need to penetrate this alliance and contain it by searching for its components and addressing how to deal with them through diplomatic action, the media, and political analysis. It is a national responsibility we have been very late in placing on our list of ways to handle the Arab-Israeli conflict, be it in the age of confrontation or peaceful settlement.

It clearly points out our shortcomings in our studies of the U.S. and Israeli societies and how decisions are made in these societies. The paper says this deficiency has become clear with the beginning of the peaceful settlement process, in which, unfortunately, we have dropped from our account the fact that the U.S.-Israeli alliance will continue, by considering the U.S. party an unbiased sponsor of the peace process. We also conveniently dropped the ugly face of the Israeli military machine. We, as Arabs, are seeking speedy normalization with the Hebrew state.

The paper warns that in addition to the shortcomings of our studies of the U.S. and Israeli societies, we do not work with the spirit of an integrated group among the Arab diplomatic, media, and intellectual circles in confronting this alliance.

The writer concludes his article saying: Let the issue of the U.S.-Israeli alliance be the common project of all the centers of research and studies currently at work in Arab capitals. Arab political decisionmakers are in dire need of results such as this project.

Mahfuz al-Ansari, chief editor of AL-JUMHURIYAH, in his weekly article, asks: Who are the United States and Israel directing their arsenal of strategic, military, and security agreements against?

Referring to the recent Israeli aggression on Lebanon, he says a decision was made to remove Lebanon from the Arab and regional map for a long period by creating the crisis that erupted in 1975 and that led to a civil war in an attempt to strike at the coexistence formula of this genius entity, insist on terminating its role as a financial center and focus for tourism, and end its role as a source for exporting highly qualified technical cadres.

The writer adds that neither Hizballah nor the katyushas were the justification or excuse behind striking Lebanon; the justification and excuse were the Lebanese people whose sons were dismembered and whose men, women, and children were torn apart by the artillery, bombs, and missiles so badly that an officer from the international forces in the Qana camp screamed in horror: "Help me. My feet are sinking in a dough of human flesh." This is the story and I believe it has not ended yet. I also believe that worse is yet to come.

Journalist Dr. Fathi 'Abd-al-Fattah writes in his weekly column in AL-JUMHURIYAH that the strategic agreement between the United States and Israel follows the two-week Israeli aggression on Lebanon.

It seems that things were arranged this way.

He added that it was known before the bestial Israeli aggression on Lebanese territory that Shim'on Peres would visit the United States at the beginning of May. It was also known and disseminated that there was a strategic security agreement that Peres would sign in Washington.

'Abd-al-Fattah expresses his surprise at an announcement by U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry that the objective of this agreement is to guarantee Israel's security and military superiority to confront any attack on it. It is as though poor and overpowered Israel, which opened its hellfire on the Lebanese people, killed and wounded hundreds of civilians, and destroyed and de-

molished many vital Lebanese installations, including the infrastructure, is the one deserving U.S. solidarity to protect its security and military superiority.

Libya

Libya: Bilateral Talks With North Korea Begin

LD0105140696 Tripoli Great Jamahiriya Radio
Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bilateral talks between the Great Jamahiriya and North Korea opened in Tripoli this morning to discuss prospects for cooperation between the two friendly countries and ways of strengthening and developing it in all spheres.

The secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation and Kim Yong-nam, member of the Korean Workers' Party Central Committee Politburo, vice premier of the Executive Council, and foreign minister, attended the talks.

At the start of the talks, the brother secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation delivered a speech in which he welcomed the Korean delegation, stressing that the friendship and cooperation between the two countries are firmly established and that the Great Jamahiriya is eager to boost prospects for cooperation between the two countries in all spheres — economic, trade, and technical.

DPRK Foreign Minister Kim Yong-Nam reaffirmed North Korea's support for and solidarity with the Great Jamahiriya in confronting the unjust sanctions imposed on it, and stressed his country's eagerness and desire to strengthen its cooperation with the Great Jamahiriya in a way that will promote the interests of the Libyan Arab and Korean peoples.

Libya: JANA—'CIA Agent' Says 'American Official' Planted Lockerbie Bomb

LD0105203996 Tripoli JANA in English
1954 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Further facts regarding the so-called Lockerbie case are being uncovered on a daily basis to re-affirm the innocence of the two suspected Libyan nationals.

An American CIA agent confirmed that the case against the suspected was fabricated from the outset within an attempt to satisfy the victims families who believe this political and intelligence game.

The official confirmed in an interview with the German weekly magazine FOCUS on condition of unanimity

that implicating the Libyan citizens in this case came as a result of American political calculations which have nothing to do with the case.

The official indicated that the insistence of the American Government to level accusations on the Libyan nationals is caused by the position adopted by Libya in confronting American aggressive policy against the Arab nation and the nations of the world.

The American intelligence official revealed that the bomb which destroyed the Pan Am airliner was planted in Frankfurt airport and the one who planted it was an American official in the Pan Am airliner. He confirmed that there were investigators from the anti-drugs agency and elements from American intelligence on board the airliner en route to their homes for the Christmas holiday.

Tunisia

Tunisia: European Investment Bank Praises Economic Performance

LD0105211696 Tunis LE RENOUVEAU in French 25 Apr 96 p 5

[Article by H.B.A: "Tunisia-European Investment Bank — 'We Admire Very Much the Efforts Accomplished by Tunisia', said Mrs. Ariane Obolensky, the Deputy Chairman of EIB"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The financial cooperation between Tunisia and the European Union has never ceased to develop to strengthen the economic development of the country, since the two parties signed their first financial agreement in 1976. The current visit to Tunis by Mrs. Ariane Obolensky, the deputy chairman of the EIB [European Investment Bank] and a delegation, seeks to discuss future projects. The EIB trebled its investments in 1992-96, compared to 1987-91. These investments show Tunisia's capabilities and potentials it exploits progressively. [passage omitted]

The EIB "will increase" its investments to a level appropriate with the Tunisian priorities. For instance, the EIB participated with 43 million Ecus in rehabilitation projects and the modernization of the main ports, road and motorway construction, and even in Tunisian financial institutions.

"The action will continue this year," said Mrs. Obolensky. [passage omitted]

Tunisia: President Announces Increase in Minimum Wage

LD0105221096 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 1 May 96

[Speech by Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali at Carthage Palace on 1 May — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Male and female citizens:

Today we mark Labor Day to once again honor all workers within our customary framework of an assiduous devotion to an appreciation of work, and its higher status on the ladder of noble, civilized values, and also to emphasize its intrinsic role in achieving peoples' revival and in building their future on firm, correct foundations. [passage omitted]

In order to consolidate the honorable results which we have achieved in supporting efforts exerted by enterprises in the sphere of health and safety at work, we announce today our decision to reduce the rate of participation in the compensation system for damage incurred as a result of accidents at work and vocational illnesses to about 25 percent for the benefit of the enterprises which have made distinguished efforts in the sphere of protection against vocational dangers and improving work conditions.

We have also decided to allocate an investment grant of 20 percent of the cost of protection projects inside the enterprise, and to introduce the necessary modifications to the loan system for the benefit of enterprises to enable them to finance their programs to improve work conditions by extending the repayment period to ten years, instead of the current seven years, giving them a three-year grace period and reducing the interest rate to around six percent, instead of the current 8.25 percent.

In consolidation of the humanitarian orientation of our social policy, we have decided to set up a system according to which the National Fund for Social Security will pay the workers' legal dues and the redundancy bonuses owed to them if they were dismissed for economic or technical reasons, if the enterprise was proven to be unable to settle these dues, and bonuses and equipping the fund with the legal means to recover what had been paid to the workers at the debtor enterprise. In this way, we will guarantee for the worker priority to recover his legal dues in such a way that it will enable him to confront his daily needs irrespective of the financial condition of the enterprise to which he belonged. This decision supplements a decision which stipulates giving priority for paying workers' dues before recovering state debts. [passage omitted]

Since duty calls for special concern to protect the poor groups of workers, we have decided to increase the guaranteed minimum wage in the industrial and agricultural sectors and charged the government with

implementing this decision after discussing it with the social partners. We have also decided that this measures takes effect as from today. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Yemen: Eritrea Agrees To Arbitration on Hanish Dispute

LD0105192796 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yemen and Eritrea have agreed to submit to arbitration their dispute over the strategic Hanish archipelago in the Red Sea. The French ministry of foreign affairs says the two countries have agreed to seek a peaceful solution to their dispute and that they have approved the terms of an accord on the principles of the arbitration. There are no other details for the time being.

Yemen: French Envoy—Agreement Sign of 'Eagerness' for Settlement

JN0205053496 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Francis Gutmann, an ambassador in the French Foreign Ministry and the envoy of French President Jacques Chirac, left Sanaa yesterday. Gutmann concluded his fourth shuttle tour of the region. The tour took him to Sanaa and Asmara as part of the French mediation efforts to settle the question of the Eritrean occupation of Yemen's al-Hanish al-Kabir island.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA, the French envoy asserted that our country and Eritrea agreed to the principles proposed by France. He said that the two countries agreed that France should announce their acceptance of the deal. He noted that this agreement provides principles for a settlement and clearly indicates the two countries' eagerness to work out a peaceful settlement through arbitration.

Meanwhile, AFP said that France announced yesterday that Yemen and Eritrea agreed to resort to arbitration to settle their dispute. AFP added that the French Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the Governments of Yemen and Eritrea agreed to a peaceful settlement to their dispute through arbitration and approved the conditions of an agreement on the principles of this arbitration.

Yemen: Official Calls Eritrean Approval of French Plan 'Victory'

NC0205104796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0905 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 2 May (MENA)—Ghalib Jamil, secretary general for political affairs at the

Yemeni Foreign Ministry, said that Eritrean authorities' approval of the draft principles project, submitted by the French Government, is a victory for the peace option adopted by Yemen since the crisis started. It also represents a move toward resolving the problems between Sanaa and Asmara that began when Eritrea occupied the Yemeni Hanish islands in December of last year.

The Yemeni official added in a statement to the MENA correspondent that the next step after Eritrea's approval, which was announced by the French Foreign Ministry last night, is to start choosing international arbiters; one will be chosen by Yemen and the other by Eritrea, alongside France, which will assume the role of mediator between the two sides.

He noted that although Yemen approved the French draft principles last March, it has not yet chosen the country that will represent it in the arbitration committee. It is possible that this country will be among the countries represented in the International Court of Justice, but could also be from outside this framework.

The Yemeni official expressed his hope that the arbitration committee, which will be formed soon, succeeds in reaching a final decision on the issue and terminating the dispute between the two countries. Otherwise, according to the French draft, the conflict will at a later stage be submitted to the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

The Yemeni official reaffirmed that documents and all other papers confirm Yemen's 100 percent legitimate and historic sovereignty over the island.

It is worth mentioning that the agreement on principles submitted by French mediator Gutmann, which was approved by the two sides, stipulates that the two countries should be committed to stopping all combat activities and military escalation, renouncing the use of force, and accepting and adhering to the principle of international arbitration with France's guarantees. If arbitration does not succeed, the dispute will then be submitted to the International Court of Justice.

Iraq: 'Informed Sources' Say Ambassador Will Not Return to Amman

MM0105153796 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT
in Arabic 1 May 96 p 6

[Report by 'Imad al-Furayh in Amman: "The Iraqi Ambassador May Not Return to His Post in Jordan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi informed sources in the Jordanian capital have revealed that Nuri al-Wis, the Iraqi ambassador to Amman, was admitted to the third floor of the Arab center for heart surgery in Amman for medical check-ups, prior to his departure from Amman to Baghdad last week.

The sources said that the ambassador tried to delay his departure as much as possible, but that the Iraqi Government's orders were very strict about his return to the Iraqi capital on the pretext of spending the blessed 'Id al-Adha holiday there, so that his recall by Baghdad is not given any political significance.

Baghdad tried to avoid pushing Amman into adopting reciprocal measures, but the Jordanian Government had recalled its Ambassador Bassam Qaqish from Baghdad because of the murder and disappearance of some Jordanians in Iraq.

The sources confirmed that Ambassador al-Wis will not return to Amman after the 'Id holiday, and according to the Iraqi sources, should the Jordanian ambassador return to Baghdad, Sa'd al-Faysal, Iraq Foreign Ministry under secretary, will return to Amman instead of al-Wis. The sources said that the decree appointing Sa'd al-Faysal as Iraq's ambassador to Amman had been issued some time ago, but that its implementation had been postponed.

The sources believe that Ambassador Nuri al-Wis' file had become too full, with his activities in Jordan and his interference in Jordanian internal affairs.

The Iraqi Government prefers to avoid worsening the crisis between itself and the Jordanian Government, and to change the ambassador instead.

An Iraqi opposition source in Amman said that Ambassador al-Wis has many substantial commercial interests and that all his accounts are with foreign banks abroad.

Iraq: Columnist Says Nations Reject U.S. 'Domination'

JN0205100596 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic
14 Apr 96 p 2

[From the "Standpoint" column by 'Isa Isma'il al-'Abbadi: "Open Rejection of U.S. Domination"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq, under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn, has every right to be proud of the fact that it was the first country to say a big, resounding "no" to U.S. domination of the world. It said that in words, as well as deeds, during the Mother of Battles, since the tragedies resulting from Washington's domination and monopolization of the international community have been enumerable, very harmful, and most unfair in the history of mankind.

A few days ago, China and France agreed that "no one country or bloc should dominate the world." "The world is proceeding toward a multipolar system that is more reassuring than the unipolar system," Chinese Premier Li Peng said during a recent meeting in Paris with French President Jacques Chirac. He also said: "No single power or bloc can dominate the world, because new forces have emerged, including China, the rest of Asia, and the European Union."

The Chinese-French declaration against the unipolar system and the reference to the multipolar system confirm the correct and accurate analyses reached by leader President Saddam Husayn when he asserted on several occasions that the world cannot be subjected to the domination of a single power, that U.S. domination of the world has harmed many people, and that it is essential to confront the plans for imperialist hegemony.

The period of U.S. domination of the world has led to enumerable tragedies. It is enough to refer to the U.S. aggression and the embargo against Iraq; the different forms of embargo against Libya, Sudan, and Yugoslavia; the various forms of U.S. pressure against the republics of the former Soviet Union, certain European and nonaligned states, China, and Japan; the wars that Washington has waged on various pretexts against Somalia, Panama, Haiti, and Nicaragua; U.S. protection of Zionist aggression, etc.

The world cannot tolerate U.S. domination any longer. If China has found the Taiwanese issue an occasion to declare its rejection of U.S. domination and its resolve to play an influential role in world events, every state or international bloc among the new powers also has its own reason or reasons to declare its rejection of unipolar hegemony and Washington's attempt to monopolize the world. In the new world order, the United States must find a new way of dealing with the world away from

the logic of domination, which has tangibly proved that it cannot stand in the way of nations and the various international blocs that are determined to play an influential role in international politics and defend their national interests away from the logic of the American big stick.

Iraq: Security Personnel Wounded in Bomb Blast in al-'Amarah

NC0105152996 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1529 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] To coincide with the cursed birthday of the tyrant Saddam, our zealous strugglers have stepped up their jihad operations inside the dear homeland.

The newsletter AL-NABA', mouthpiece of the Islamic revolution's mujahidin, reports that one of its strugglers detonated an explosive device inside a lair belonging to the regime near the intercity bus station in al-'Amarah. The explosion wounded six security mercenaries and another mercenary working for the military police. The struggler also succeeded in capturing a Kalashnikov and returned safely to base.

Iraq: Integration of Socialist, Private Industrial Sectors Viewed

JN0205094396 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 15 Apr 96 p 4

[Report by Tariq al-Juburi]

[FBIS Translated Text] The special seminar on industrial integration, held in accordance with the directives of leader President Saddam Husayn, began yesterday. The seminar seeks to find and create methods for industrial integration between the socialist and private sectors.

The seminar was attended by Lieutenant General 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, minister of oil and chairman of the Industrial Committee, and Industrial Committee members 'Adnan 'Abd-al-Majid Jasim, minister of

industry and minerals; Ja'far Diya' Ja'far, adviser at the presidency; Dayf 'Abd-al-Majid Ahmad, director of the Military Industrialization Organization (MIO); and Staff Air Lieutenant General Muzahim Sa'd al-Hasan; as well as the under secretaries of the Ministry of Industry and Minerals and the Ministry of Oil and several general directors.

The seminar began with a speech by Faruq al-Bandar, chairman of the preparatory committee, in which he affirmed the importance of the industrial sector and the support it is receiving from leader President Saddam Husayn. He emphasized the president's directive on the need to pay more attention to private industrial activity and the opportunity to play a wider role in the development process that is being witnessed by our country.

The speech was followed by a discussion of the seminar's main topics, which included: the creation of investment opportunities in various industries, ideas and requirements for backing private industrial activity, factories and production lines that can be established in industrial firms in favor of the private sector, and industries scheduled for transfer from the socialist sector to the private sector.

Khalid Ibrahim Sa'id, secretary of the Preparatory Committee, told AL-THAWRAH: This seminar is being held according to leader President Saddam Husayn's directives to the various units of the Ministry of Industry and Minerals, the Oil Ministry, the MIO, and the Atomic Energy Organization, which have presented their ideas on how to achieve integration between the socialist and private sectors. These ideas are contained in a working paper that was submitted to the Industrial Committee, which decided to hold an expanded seminar with the participation of the representatives of the Planning Board, the General Directorate of Industrial Development, the Iraqi Economists Association, the Iraqi Industries Union, the engineers and geologists union, and other parties concerned with this subject.

Israel: 'Text' of Joint Peres-Clinton Statement 30 Apr

TA0105181896 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS
OFFICE in English 1700 GMT 1 May 96

["Text" of the statement issued by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and U.S. President Bill Clinton on 30 April]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Clinton and Prime Minister Peres have concluded two days of intensive discussions on a broad range of issues relating to the U.S.-Israel relationship. Those discussions reflect the deep, long-standing and unique bonds of friendship which have characterized the U.S.-Israel relationship and the legacy of shared values, common interests, and mutual respect for democracy that have made this close and special relationship endure.

The President and Prime Minister reviewed the extent of the U.S.-Israel relationship in all its dimensions. They agreed that this cooperation in security, economic, and diplomatic areas is grounded in institutions that are functioning extremely effectively to the benefit to both countries. At the same time, they agreed that, in view of continuing threats to regional peace and stability, and in particular the dangers posed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and advanced military technologies, U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation will grow in importance.

To this end, the President and the Prime Minister agreed that a steering committee headed by the U.S. Secretary of State and the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs would be established to explore means of enhancing and — where appropriate — formalizing that cooperation. Two working groups will report to the steering committee. The first, dealing with security and defense matters, will consider all options — including the possibility of more formal security accords — for how best to meet common threats in the years to come. It will also identify ways to maximize the effectiveness of U.S. aid to Israel. The second will deal with other policy matters relating to U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation.

The two leaders affirmed that the strategic partnership between the two countries will continue to be based on two key principles: first, the United States' unshakable commitment to Israel's security and its determination to minimize the risks and costs Israel confronts as it pursues peace; and second, the U.S.-Israel mutual commitment to a comprehensive peace and their determination to move toward that goal.

With respect to Israel's security, the President specifically reaffirmed the United States' commitment to maintain Israel's qualitative edge and to preserve and

strengthen Israel's capability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any adversary or likely combination of adversaries.

The President and Prime Minister took great pride in signing the U.S.-Israel Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Accord. This agreement sets out practical measures enabling their two countries to make the best possible use of their expertise, resources, and capabilities in the war against terror. A Joint Counter-Terrorism Group has been established to monitor and oversee the implementation of the agreement. Israel and the United States also agreed to seek to coordinate their efforts with the international effort against terror launched at Sharm-al-Shaykh on March 13, 1996.

The President and the Prime Minister also took note of the joint statement on theater missile defense cooperation signed by the Prime Minister and Secretary of Defense Perry (on) April 28. The United States and Israel recognize (that) the defense of Israel will be made more effective by undertaking necessary steps to ensure that Israel's theater missile defenses are supported by related United States capabilities. The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the positive results to date of the ongoing bilateral dialogue on issues relating to the transfer of equipment and technology to third countries.

With respect to their determination to achieve a comprehensive peace, the two leaders agreed on the importance of implementation of agreements reached and the need to expand the orbit of Arab-Israeli peacemaking with a view toward achieving normal, peaceful relations between Israel and all its Arab neighbors. They welcomed the decision by the Palestinian National Council to cancel all the provisions of the Palestinian National Covenant which deny Israel's right to exist or are otherwise inconsistent with the September 1993 exchange of letters between Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman 'Arafat. This action is an important demonstration by the Palestinians of their commitment to honor the terms of the 1993 Oslo Accords.

The President and Prime Minister also expressed satisfaction with the improved understanding reached last week on southern Lebanon as a result of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's negotiating efforts and after discussions with the governments of Israel, Lebanon, and in consultation with Syria. They noted the importance of prompt activation of the monitoring committee and consultative group established by the understanding.

Finally, the President and Prime Minister agreed on the need to end the Arab boycott and to eliminate discrimination against Israel in all international organizations, including the United Nations.

Israel: Peres, France's Chirac Discuss Lebanon Operation, Iran*TA0105172396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1405 GMT 1 May 96*

[Telephone talk between anchor Goni Mardor, in the Jerusalem studio, and correspondent Gid'on Kouts in Paris — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mardor] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is on his way back to Israel after his stopover in Paris. In Paris Peres met French President Jacques Chirac and UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali. Earlier today he participated in a ceremony in which a square in Paris was named after Yitzhaq Rabin. Our correspondent Gid'on Kouts is on the phone line from Paris. Gid'on, would you describe the meeting with Chirac as good?

[Kouts] Both sides described the meeting as good. The French and the Israelis said the meeting clarified the differences of opinion between Israel and France regarding the French activity in the region. Shim'on Peres himself said Israel does not oppose the French activity, and this was highlighted by the French stations in their news programs. A slight disagreement could be discerned regarding the implementation of UN Resolution 425 dealing with Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Peres said that this withdrawal should also involve the disarming of Hizballah. Chirac's spokesperson said the president did not react, but we know that France to a large extent shares this view.

According to Israeli sources, the sides did not discuss the precise operation of the monitoring mechanism in which France is involved because it was determined that France and the United States will conclude this issue between them and only later will the other countries be involved. Peres said, however, that Israel believes this body should convene in the proximity of the region concerned — namely, in the Middle East. He said that the monitoring mechanism does not involve the deployment of a multinational force in the region.

France is slated to lead the economic move of Lebanon's rehabilitation and Israel said it is willing to join the effort. At the same time Peres said Israel will not pay compensation to the residents of Lebanon, because it too has suffered heavy damage.

The operation of the monitoring mechanism will be unrelated to the peace process with Syria and Lebanon — in which France wants to participate. This monitoring body, however, will be able to deal with issues relating to a future arrangement with Lebanon — this in order to please France.

A central issue discussed in the meeting was the Iran issue. As is well known, France maintains relations with Iran — what it refers to as a critical dialogue. Chirac promised that France will use its contacts to curb Iran in the region. The Israeli sources say the two sides agree about the nature of Iran's activity in the region.

[Mardor] Gid'on, I understand you recorded some of Peres' remarks after this meeting.

[Kouts] True. Peres came to Paris bearing the message that President Clinton does not oppose France's involvement — something that pleased the French after they heard different thing coming out of Washington. We asked Peres whether Israel got all it wanted in Washington — this after we have heard reports that Israel failed to get a defense pact there.

[Begin Peres recording] President Clinton accepted our requests. We wanted an antiterror agreement and asked to establish a team which will examine the possibility of a defense pact. Both things were included in the statement. [end recording]

[Mardor] Thank you very much, Gid'on Kouts.

Israel: Peres News Conference on Return From U.S.*TA0105184996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1815 GMT 1 May 96*

[News conference by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres upon his return from a visit to the United States and France at Ben-Gurion Airport — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Peres] As you all know, I have just returned from a brief visit to the United States. Relations between the United States and Israel have reached a new high. I do not believe that at the present time there is another country that enjoys the amount of friendship and understanding that Israel has been shown by Washington. For a long time now President Clinton has been fulfilling a leading role in the peace process and is serving as a buffer against any attempts to destroy the peace process.

We dealt with three main issues: One issue was how to ensure Israel's security and preserve its qualitative edge in such a way as to enable it not only to deal with the threats of attacks, but also with problems stemming from the peace process. Two, we discussed how to proceed with the peace process. I believe that new and interesting possibilities have been discovered. Three, we discussed how to prevent the attempt to delay, disrupt, or kill the peace process.

We signed several agreements, the most important of which is the antiterror agreement — which is an agreement encompassing the strategies, coalitions, and

necessary and available measures to fight terrorism. We agreed to establish an antimissile defense theater, because missiles are becoming an ever greater problem — seeing that it is a weapon that crosses borders and which is not necessarily possessed by armies only, but is also held by gangs. It is also a type of weapon being used without a declaration of war necessarily being made. We also signed an agreement on developing antimissile weapons, especially referring to continuing the work on the Arrow project. The President announced that the United States will earmark \$200 million for that purpose. We also agreed to develop a laser anti-katyusha weapon, which will be ready at the end of 1997. Secretary of Defense William Perry suggested, however, that meanwhile we settle for an interim weapon. All of these things together create a cooperation network to provide an answer to a new type of threat. I also understood from Pentagon officials and others that this is the first attempt to forge this kind of broad and varied cooperation. I want to express my gratitude to President Clinton, to the U.S. Administration, and Congress — seeing as the support for Israel comes from both parties.

I also held a brief visit to France which included a luncheon with President Chirac. I believe that France can fulfill a useful role in the peace process; a role appropriate to its historic commitments and ambitions to fulfill a positive role in this process. Thank you very much.

[Qol Yisra'el's Dani Zaen] Mr. Prime Minister, I want to ask you two questions. First, returning to mundane Israeli reality — the head of the opposition today charged that your U.S. visit is part of Labor's and your own election campaign to the premiership. What is your reaction to this allegation? Two, the U.S. Senate is talking about the extradition of Abu-al-'Abbas [Muhammad 'Abbas] from the Palestinian Authority area in Gaza to the United States. It looks as though they are doing something against terrorism whereas things here are somewhat different.

[Peres] To answer your first question, perhaps it is desirable to hold elections if this means we will receive such warm support in the United States. Even the elections cannot spoil this support, and we have really reached a new peak. I believe that the opposition will understand the significance of this in three years. Usually it takes them three years to understand things; just as it took them three years to understand Oslo, they will understand this too.

As for the Congress, this issue involves a legal process and their jurists will handle this issue.

[Unidentified correspondent] Israel TV 2 this evening reported that there are new chances for the release of Jonathan Pollard. Can you elaborate on this issue?

[Peres] Since I have not seen your newscast, I have nothing to add beyond what you reported. I am unwilling to discuss this issue in a more serious vein. Thank you.

Israel: Netanyahu—Peres 'Cynically Using' Relations With U.S.

TA0105124296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1200 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu has accused Prime Minister Shim'on Peres of cynically using Israeli-U.S. relations for election purposes. Netanyahu also said that remarks made by Peres imply that the agreement of understandings in Lebanon will only hold until after the elections — something that amounts to a gimmick. Netanyahu was addressing a Knesset plenum devoted to Operation Grapes of Wrath.

Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that Minister 'Uzi Bar'am retorted that Israeli-U.S. relations are closer than ever, adding that Peres' present visit faithfully reflects this situation.

Israel: U.S. Said Seeking King Hassan Visit to Israel To Aid Peres

TA0205105596 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew
2 May 96 p 1

[Report by the political correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States is trying to persuade King Hassan of Morocco to visit Israel on the eve of the Knesset elections, as part of the endeavor to boost Mr. Peres' position in the premiership race.

Previous Israeli attempts to organize a visit to Israel by the king of Morocco had been turned down. King Hassan chairs the Committee on Jerusalem at the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the objective of which is to wage a struggle for an Islamic Jerusalem. Because of this capacity, he has refrained from visiting Jerusalem.

Mr. Peres will also meet with King Husayn on the eve of the Knesset elections, within the framework of his election campaign, which involves heads of governments and other political figures.

Peres is expected to organize international productions [hafaqot] during this month with the participation of kings and princes from various countries, with whom he will hold meetings in a bid to impress the Israeli public and gain headlines. Following what he considers

a successful trip to the United States where he received public endorsement from President Clinton, he will have the international system enlisted in his favor. The visit to France was also a part of the same plan.

Israel: Angolan Minister Meets Baraq, Requests Assistance

TA0205101396 *Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English* 2 May 96 p 3

[Report by Batsheva Tsur]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Angola, where some 70,000 people have been killed by mines in the past two years, is asking aid from Israel in tracing and defusing the explosives.

In a Jerusalem meeting yesterday, Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq told his Angolan counterpart, Juoro De Miranda, that Israel would join in the UN effort to rid that country of the mines which were haphazardly laid by the warring sides. There are no maps available of the mine sites.

Israel is also looking into the possibility of sending a medical team to fight the malaria which has affected members of the UN peacekeeping forces maintaining the cease-fire in Angola.

The Angolan foreign minister delivered a letter from Angolan President Jose Dos Santos expressing satisfaction over the Middle East peace process, to be given to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

De Miranda is expected to give a similar epistle to PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat when they meet today in Gaza.

Angola has also expressed interest in expanding its international cooperation projects with Israel in the fields of agriculture, health and education.

The Angolans also presented an unusual request — that Israel send experts to train their diplomatic corps, noting that after years of colonial rule they had not prepared a cadre of diplomats.

Israel: Peres Said Prepared To Evacuate Hebron Before Elections

TA0205053496 *Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew* 2 May 96 p A1

[Report by Aluf Ben and Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Today Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will convene the defense establishment leaders for a discussion on the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal from Hebron. Peres is prepared to complete the evacuation before the elections, subject to army chiefs' recommendations.

Peres' close aides have advised him not to reach an interim arrangement in Hebron, but rather to complete the evacuation in one quick move that will consist of the concurrent deployment of the IDF and the Palestinian Police. Central Command Chief 'Uzi Dayan estimates that the transfer of security affairs will take two weeks. Sources in Peres' entourage said the IDF top echelons are largely in favor of the early evacuation of the city.

After the evacuation, Israel will control an area that consists of Qiryat Arba', the Jewish neighborhood in downtown Hebron, and the Cave of the Patriarchs. The area that will remain under the IDF control is inhabited by some 20,000 Palestinians.

Peres said yesterday that due to Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] strength in Hebron, security is the main problem in the city's evacuation. In an interview published in today's YOM SHISHI, the prime minister says that the Cave of the Patriarchs will remain under Israeli control in the permanent arrangement. "The Cave of the Patriarchs will remain ours; there is no question about it," Peres said. In reply to a question on how the Palestinians will react, Peres said: "They will have to live with it." [passage omitted]

Israel: Knesset Plenum Debates Hebron Withdrawal

TA0205104696 *Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English* 2 May 96 p 2

[Report by Liat Collins]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] While Qiryat Arba' residents and Meretz supporters protested outside, the Knesset yesterday discussed motions calling for a postponement of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal from Hebron.

Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal, speaking on behalf of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, said Israel intends to honor the agreements with the Palestinians, including withdrawing from Hebron, but the timetable demands serious consideration. Likud faction chairman Moshe Qatzav called on the government to postpone the pullback until after the elections.

MK [Knesset Member] Hanan Porat (NRP) [National Religious Party] said the Hebron redeployment "would be a crime against Judaism, national interests and state security. I believe the entire Oslo agreement was a miserable affair. We are facing a difficult situation and the question is how we deal with facts already on the ground and how to prevent future disasters. The disaster which we're facing in Hebron exceeds those of Nabulus and Janin, and it's not for nothing that you have hesitated to pull the IDF out from Hebron."

Shahal said under the agreement the IDF is not to completely pull out of Hebron and would remain in control of the Makhpela Cave [Cave of the Patriarchs] and the Jewish quarter. He said there would be no more than 400 Palestinians policemen and in the city itself there would be only unarmed municipal inspectors and joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols.

Interior Minister Hayim Ramon accused the NRP of trying to avoid the discussion on whether or not to separate from the Palestinians. He said Israel "has to make the difficult choice between the tombs of the forefathers and the future of the sons."

Environment minister Yosi Sarid said if Peres did not honor the accords, PA [Palestinian Authority] President Yasir 'Arafat would not be bound by them, either. The NRP declared its motion of no-confidence. The vote will take place at a later date, after the Knesset House Committee determines whether a no-confidence motion can be heard during the recess.

Earlier yesterday, members of the religious factions met in the Knesset with residents from Hebron and Qiryat Arba' to discuss the withdrawal. They are demanding an urgent meeting with Peres on the issue. Qiryat Arba' resident Rabbi Eli'ezer Waldman warned that residents might be forced into desperate and dangerous measures.

Hebron residents said that even OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. 'Uzi Dayan had told them he was "shaking" at the thought of what could happen in Hebron after the pullback.

[Writing on page A3 of Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 2 May, Shahar Ilan reports: "The religious parties demand that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres defer the decision on the Hebron pullout until the permanent status agreement. The four parties — NRP, SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], Degel Hatorah, and Agudat Yisra'el — will also look into the possibility of issuing a joint antiwithdrawal letter signed by all the religious spiritual leaders. A decision to this effect was made at a meeting held by the MK's of all the religious parties yesterday morning." The religious parties, which "are going to demand an urgent meeting with the prime minister," add in their resolution that they "are voicing trepidation at the government plan to pull the IDF out of Hebron, both from the Jewish and the security points of view." They warn that the implementation of the withdrawal decision would lead to national rift.]

Israel: Right Wing Launches Campaign Against Hebron Pullout

TA0205095596

[FBIS Report] Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 2 May, in a page-2 report by Bill Hutman, states: "Many of Hebron's Jewish residents came to Jerusalem yesterday to protest the planned IDF [Israel Defense Forces] evacuation of the city and to attract national support for their struggle."

"The protesters from Hebron and Qiryat Arba' were joined outside the Knesset by residents from other settlements. A special plenum session was held yesterday in which the Hebron withdrawal was discussed. In the early afternoon, there were several hundred demonstrators present."

"Qiryat Arba' spokesman No'am Arnon characterized the protest as 'quiet,' explaining that Hebron's Jews didn't want to alienate the rest of the country, but gain their support. He warned, however, that if the government goes through with the planned redeployment, 'people might lose control.'"

The 24 SHA'OT supplement of Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 2 May carries a related report by Tzvi Singer on page 2, adding: "So far settlers have not crossed any red lines or staged disturbances or Goldstein-style terrorist attacks, God forbid. In recent days, Hebron and Qiryat Arba' leaders have spared no effort trying to warn the settlers to stay away from extreme activities. 'Do not play into Peres' hands a month before the elections,' rabbis and public leaders urged the settlers. Yet speaking off the record, more than one of these leaders voiced dread about what would happen if the government insists on evacuating Hebron. 'It will end in a bloodbath,' they warned."

"One group that has lost its patience is Kakh. In recent days it reactivated the Committee for Security on the Roads, which has been conducting 'security patrols' in the township of Halhul north of Hebron."

"So far the settlers' success in political lobbying has exceeded all their expectations. In recent weeks Qiryat Arba' leaders and heads of the Jewish settlement in Hebron appealed to every ultra-Orthodox party, leaving out almost no spiritual leader or influential rabbi. They reached even the heads of the Jewish Orthodox organizations in the United States and other countries, whom they asked to pressure Prime Minister Shim'on Peres not to pull the IDF out of Hebron before the elections." "The settlers even managed to enlist Yisra'el Ba'aliya, Sharansky's new immigrant party, to their struggle. Sharansky and his associates, who were deeply impressed by the settlers' appeal, promised to speak

with the prime minister and to pressure him to defer the redeployment.

"The settlers' efforts to stop the evacuation was joined by all the nonparliamentarian right-wing organizations. Zo Artzenu will launch its own antiwithdrawal campaign tonight. Movement activists will spread sleeping bags on sidewalks and public benches in various cities and declare themselves 'homeless' [preceding word in English] for as long as the government adheres to its Hebron plan.

"A delegation of some 20 high-ranking reserve officers, members of the Forum for National Fortitude, visited Hebron this week, toured various sites, and in conclusion issued a 'security manifesto' adamantly rejecting the redeployment."

Israel: New Clinton Idea Said Expected To Secure Pollard's Release

TA0105182296 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 1 May 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior Israeli official has informed our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen that a new opportunity has arisen to secure the release of spy Jonathan Pollard. The issue was brought up at the tete-a-tete between Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and President Bill Clinton, during which Clinton proposed a new idea that may bring about Jonathan Pollard's release.

Israel: Clinton Tells Peres 'Remorse' From Pollard To Ease Release

TA0205053696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] U.S. President Bill Clinton told Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in a one-on-one conversation that if convicted spy Jonathan Pollard would show more remorse for what he did, it would be helpful in the effort to achieve his release. An American source involved in the Peres trip told reporter David Ze'ev that the President did not, however, commit to free Pollard, who is serving a life term for spying for Israel. During last night's airport news conference, the prime minister refused to discuss the matter.

Israel: 'Secret' Labor Polls Show Peres-Netanyahu Gap Growing

TA0105141896 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 30 Apr 96 p 10

[Report by Yo'av Limor]

[FBIS Translated Text] The gap between Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu has grown to 9 percent. This comes about from secret polls commissioned by Labor early this week.

One of the two polls was commissioned by Peres' personal headquarters, headed by Ehud Barak, while the other was commissioned by the information headquarters headed by Hayim Ramon. Both polls clearly indicate that over the last few days the gap between Peres and Netanyahu has grown from five to 9-10 percent, and that Peres has passed the 50 percent mark necessary to win the elections. Labor attributes great significance to these polls, especially due to the fact that these are the first polls conducted since the agreement of understandings that ended Operation Grapes of Wrath.

The new polls were presented for the first time during a special session of the information headquarters' special "control team" Monday [29 April] night. The polls indicate that Peres is ahead of Netanyahu in the Jewish sector. There is also a discernible trend of Arab voters "returning home." These voters, who joined the undecided voters during the operation in Lebanon — especially after the killing of the 100 refugees in Qana — have returned to support Peres.

Labor sources believe that the growing gap between Peres and Netanyahu points to a split in the traditional right-wing "bloc" which has existed in Israel since 1977, as reflected in the move of Jewish voters from the right toward Peres. Labor sources believe that the public gave Peres high marks for his handling of crisis situations and that Peres' determined stand during the operation — which ended without any Israeli casualties — increased public confidence in him, something that was also reflected in the last polls.

In light of the growing gap between Peres and Netanyahu in the polls, Labor election officials plan to increase the pressure on the Likud chairman in ads and operations on the ground. In the next few days Labor will continue publishing ads using the slogan "Bibi is unsuitable," and later a parallel campaign will feature the slogan "Bibi zigzag." In this negative campaign Labor plans to highlight Bibi's fickle stances, as reflected by the frequent changes in his positions.

Lebanon: Hizballah Peace Offer Taken Seriously in Israel

MS0105102196 London THE TIMES in English
1 May 96 p 15

[Report by Michael Binyon and Christopher Walker in Tel Aviv; date not given: "Israel Takes Serious Look at Hizballah Formula for Peace"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An offer made at the weekend by a senior Hizballah leader to recognise Israel is being taken at the highest level by the Israeli Government and last night was the subject of intense international discussion.

Shaykh Khadr Nur-al-Din said in an interview with THE TIMES that the Islamic militant movement was ready to recognise the Jewish state in exchange for a comprehensive withdrawal of Israeli forces. He said that although Hizballah were not ready to forget the Israeli attack, members of the Iranian-backed movement were realists. "We want our land back. We are ready to make peace."

His unprecedented remarks have provoked a flurry in Israel. Shim'on Peres, the Prime Minister, is in America where he is discussing the aftermath of the ceasefire in Lebanon with the Clinton Administration. The Americans are anxious to prevent any breakdown of the truce and will be much interested in Shaykh Nur-al-Din's remarks.

What remains unclear is whether Hizballah is willing to recognise Israel formally. The offer of a peace deal implies recognition because no movement can negotiate seriously with an enemy unless it accepts the right of its opponent to enter into a formal agreement. Shaykh Nur-al-Din's remarks therefore are seen as implying that Hizballah does now accept that Israel is a negotiating partner and has a de facto right to enter into an agreement.

There has been a cautious reaction so far from the Israelis. However, it is recognised in Jerusalem that Shaykh Nur-al-Din is a senior figure who is unlikely to have spoken without the sanction of other members of the leadership. Israeli and American officials will want to know whether his remarks represent a fundamental change in policy or are a tactical attempt to lessen the pressure on Hizballah from all sides, including the Lebanese Government.

A senior Israeli official said the shaykh's offer could provide the spur for the Lebanese Government to disarm Hizballah and thus prompt a phased Israeli pullout from the occupied zone over a period of perhaps a year.

"The disarming of Hizballah is a condition of our withdrawal and we see these remarks as opening the way for Lebanon to do that and to create a period of calm in northern Israel," the official said. "We are not dismissing this apparent conciliatory approach out of hand, but we have a lot of serious questions to ask about it."

There has been speculation in Western capitals that Warren Christopher, the U.S. Secretary of State, who carried out an exhausting shuttle between Jerusalem and Damascus to achieve last week's ceasefire in Israel's Grapes of Wrath operation, may have received private assurances — not published after the talks from President al-Asad. The Syrian leader is thought to have assured the Americans that Syria will use its influence to push Hizballah into considering an offer to end its attacks on the Israelis.

Pressure has been put on Hizballah from all sides. It remains unclear, however how much the movement is influenced by its patrons in Damascus and Tehran, the American shuttle emphasised that as far as operations are concerned, Hizballah must enjoy at least the tacit approval of the Syrian forces in Lebanon to continue any military attacks.

In another development, Major-General Moshe Ya'alon, the chief of Israeli military intelligence, warned the Knesset foreign affairs and defence committee yesterday that intelligence had been received that Hizballah and Iran were making intensive preparations to attack Jewish and Israeli targets abroad.

Lebanon: Alleged Hizballah Bases, Groups Abroad Denied

NC0105163196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic
1615 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah denied today that it has bases or military groups outside Lebanon, as Israel claims. Hizballah issued a statement, saying: This campaign testifies to the failure of Israel's so-called Operation Grapes of Wrath.

Lebanon: Hizballah Official Denies Talk of Recognizing Israel

MM0205103596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT
in Arabic 2 May 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Hizballah Official Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: No Offer To Recognize Israel if it Withdraws"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Lebanese Hizballah denied yesterday reports of the party's willingness to recognize Israel

in return for its withdrawal from occupied southern Lebanon.

Shaykh Khadr Nur-al-Din, member of the party's Political Council, who the British newspaper THE TIMES said offered to recognize Israel, has told SHARQ AL-AWSAT that recognition of Israel "would conflict with our most basic religious and political principles, which reject any dealings with the usurping entity."

The Hizballah official said that he said absolutely nothing "about anything concerning this idea, because it is completely rejected and condemned." He added that a suspension of Hizballah's attacks from southern Lebanon after Israel's withdrawal "in no way means concluding a truce with Israel or recognizing its entity."

Lebanon: Argentine Daily Interviews Hizballah Assistant Secretary

PY0105183996 Buenos Aires CLARIN in Spanish
27 Apr 96 p 34

[Interview with Shaykh Nahim Kassem, Hizballah assistant secretary general, by special correspondent Maria Laura Avignolo "somewhere in the southern district of Beirut, 14 hours before Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's cease-fire announcement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Avignolo] During the negotiations, did you discuss ceasing the attacks against Israeli military targets, or will there also be no more targets?

[Kassem] We will implement resistance as long as the land is occupied. Let Israel pull out of Lebanon and, afterward, we shall see.

[Avignolo] How can you explain Iran's participation in these negotiations and this first unofficial, so to speak, public meeting between Tehran and the United States?

[Kassem] Many countries, such as France, Iran, Russia, Italy, and the United States, participated in these peace efforts. These countries have contacted the two sides involved in this dispute: Syria and Lebanon on one side, and Israel on the other side. Iranians have contacted the Syrians and Lebanese alone, and not others.

[Avignolo] Was Iran or the Lebanese Government Hizballah's authentic representative at the negotiations?

[Kassem] Hizballah is represented by itself, and not by any other party. Iran supports Hizballah's project and Hizballah's resistance in southern Lebanon. Even though Iran supports our struggle, it cannot be said that it is involved in any other way. No one can achieve a peace accord without our agreement.

[Avignolo] Does the Lebanese state champion Hizballah's stance at the peace negotiations?

[Kassem] The Lebanese state cannot sign any agreement without obtaining Hizballah's on-site agreement. Thank God, coordination between the Lebanese state and Hizballah is very good.

[Avignolo] Were Hizballah's prospects jeopardized during the negotiations?

[Kassem] I believe Hizballah's capacity has become greater after the commencement of the operation and the negotiations, as opposed to what was the case prior to that. All this is based on the popular support received by Hizballah over the past two weeks. After two weeks of operations, Hizballah's military apparatus remains intact.

[Avignolo] In your opinion, why did Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres order this offensive against Lebanon?

[Kassem] I believe it was mainly an electoral goal. This aggression was decided by the Israelis and the Americans, following the antiterrorist conference in Cairo. Yet he has chosen a dangerous game. He did not manage to destroy Hizballah's military apparatus, began to pressure the Lebanese Government and Syria for them to disarm Hizballah, and ultimately decided to attack civilian targets.

[Avignolo] What is the impact of the Qana massacre on the crisis?

[Kassem] I believe the Qana massacre represented a great conflict for the Israelis. Before Qana, there had been almost total international support for Israel and its excuse. After the massacre, however, everything changed in Lebanon's favor. The massacre prompted a debate in Israel on the correctness of pursuing the operation. The massacre exposed the Israeli identity. We knew it was a murderous state, but the international community did not believe it. Now they [not further identified] have been able to see the Israeli barbarity.

(During the interview with CLARIN, Shaykh Nahim Kassem denied the existence of a guerrilla training camp in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, and the selection of Argentina as a target for reprisals over the Israeli massacre in Qana.)

[Avignolo] The U.S. secret services emphasized the existence of a training center in Ciudad del Este. Do you admit this?

[Kassem] This is the first time that I have heard this sort of utterance. The North Americans issue this type of accusation to terrorize the people.

[Avignolo] Following the first Israeli strike, a huge control operation was carried out on the Argentine border, fearing a Hizballah attack....

[Kassem] (Roaring with laughter) Can any person with good sense believe that Hizballah could have a training camp in such a small country like Paraguay, and that the United States would tolerate it?

Lebanon: 10 Detainees Released From Khiyam Prison

NC0205075496 *Kafr Killa Voice of the South*
in Arabic 0700 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ten detainees were released from the Khiyam prison yesterday. They are: Subhi

Gharib Baydun, Tariq Husayn Shararah, and Jamal Muhammad As'ad Shararah, all from Bint Jubayl, Hisham Yusuf Khanafir from 'Aynata, Muhammad Husayn Tahir from Shaqra, 'Ali Hasan Mir'i Karim from Dayr Siryan, 'Ali Ghazi Dawi from Khiyam, Anwar Ahmad 'Ali Zuhur from Yuhmur, Samar Husayn Nayif 'Ullayq from Arnun, and 'Abd-Rahman Yasin, who is a Palestinian.

Syria: Israeli 'Terrorism' Assailed; 'Total Withdrawal' Urged

JN0105154796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 1 May 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: Yesterday's reports were so baffling that observers of the Middle East conflict expressed much astonishment. At the same time, in a tragic, angry atmosphere, Lebanon buried the children, women, and elderly, who were martyred by Israel's destruction machine in a UN shelter during Qana massacres on 18 April. Despite the widespread international denunciation of that terrible massacre, which was committed by the Israeli occupation forces in defiance of all the human norms, laws, and values, and instead of punishing the aggressor and deterring its terrorism, reports yesterday said that Peres and the U.S. Administration had signed a U.S.-Israeli accord under which Israel would be supplied with more advanced weapons to maintain its superiority and to make it capable of committing more aggression, carrying out more destruction, killing more people, and showing the ugliest forms of terrorism, which was expressed very clearly in Qana yesterday.

It was announced in Washington yesterday that what was signed by Israel and the U.S. Administration was aimed at fighting terrorism. How could the Qana women and children, who took refuge in a UN shelter, and their Lebanese kinfolk be viewed as forces of terror that require the use of these destructive weapons against them? The ones, who occupy the south and confiscate the security of Lebanon's people and establishments, are terrorists, whose aggression and terror should be deterred by the United States and the international forces and should be forced to respect and apply international resolutions. Only then the kinfolk of the martyrs of Qana, al-Nabatiyah, the south, and al-Biq'a' will stop resisting the occupation after the reasons for that resistance no longer exist.

The resistance, which Israel and the United States call terrorism, would not have existed if Israel had not occupied the land. What baffling news! The killer seeks help and asks for more support against the poor of the south and their kinfolk in all of Lebanon. These people proved their unity in the face of aggression during yesterday's mass funeral and during their confrontation against Israel's destruction machine over more than two weeks. The Israeli operation was aimed at achieving the opposite, but Israel and all the political circles in the world realized the extent of national unity in Lebanon, as well as the extent of Arab and human sympathy for the fair demands of the Lebanese people,

who are seeking to liberate their land and resist Israel's occupation of it.

Demonstrations and marches in the United States and the world capitals are evidence of the extent of Arab and human support. Therefore, no neutral people can avoid wondering whether the main international force should support legitimacy, the principles of its initiative, and the international unanimity in denouncing the massacres of the Israeli operation against Lebanon's territory, establishments, and people, including infants. If it takes a fair and decisive position, it will find every support from the international community and the world public opinion. When Israel implements Resolution 425 on Lebanon, the desired security will be achieved. But Israel wants security and the other people's rights and ignores the security and the fair demands of the Lebanese people.

The same applies to every operation in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel's commitment to Resolutions 242 and 338 and the restoration of the Golan and the occupied Arab territories are a condition for peace and will ensure the security of everybody. This was made very clear by Syria, which has always stressed the need for total withdrawal in exchange for total peace. Occupation and peace cannot coexist.

Syria: Cease-Fire Said To Show 'Failure' of Israeli 'Aggression'

JN0205070096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 2 May 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "The Confident Lebanon," AL-THAWRAH discusses the outcome of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, stressing that the evil consequences of this war turned against those who planned and staged it. They failed to achieve their declared objectives — namely, to destroy the Lebanese national resistance — and reaped only failure and disappointment.

AL-THAWRAH says: The agreement of understanding is the best evidence that the aggression failed to achieve any of its objectives. This agreement was reached in a balanced and precise way, thanks to the great efforts by President Hafiz al-Asad. The agreement negated the false pretexts that Israel used to justify its aggression, acknowledged the right of the Lebanese national resistance to confront Israeli occupation in the south, and aborted the attempt to label this resistance as terrorism. In general, the agreement favors Lebanon and its indisputable right to regain the southern part of the country in full, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 425.

AL-THAWRAH adds: At any rate, this agreement, which checked the Israeli aggression and put an end to its military belligerency in Lebanon, is not the end of the road and will not establish a status quo or maintain the occupation indefinitely. The agreement is a step toward a more comprehensive and more general objective. It is supposed to be followed by other steps to eliminate the sources of tension and allow a solution to the real causes of the crisis.

AL-THAWRAH says: These causes are represented in the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territory. Therefore, the region will not know real stability and security until the occupation is gone, the land is returned to its rightful owners, and Israel abides by the requirements and conditions of peace and abandons the policy of arrogance and force.

With its recent aggression, the Peres government confirmed that it is no different from all previous Israeli governments. It thinks that by using military force, it can impose capitulation on the Arabs. It understands peace to mean only feeble and incomplete settlements that will allow it to achieve its goals of imposing its hegemony over the region and controlling the resources of the region's people.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: If the Peres government thinks that it can, through pressure and extortion, push Syria and Lebanon toward the trap into which other Arab parties have fallen, then it is undoubtedly mistaken. It must understand that these two sisterly countries, which are united by blood, destiny, and a common fate, will not relinquish an inch of their soil. They also reject any solution that does not guarantee complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. In all cases, they will continue to adhere to the peace process and will continue to work to provide the conditions needed for the progress and success of this process. Syria and Lebanon believe that this process is the best alternative for the people of the region to arrive at an established, firm peace that will achieve security and stability for all parties and preserve their rights, interests, and dignity.

In another commentary titled "Aggression Does Not Make Peace," AL-THAWRAH says Israel's false security pretexts must be negated. It stresses that Israel is the one staging aggression, occupying the Arabs' land, threatening their existence and security, and exercising state terrorism, to which the law on war crimes apply.

AL-THAWRAH says: Murdering innocent children is not heroism. Destroying houses, leveling peaceful villages and towns, and turning south Lebanon into scorched earth are not things that the politicians and generals of the Israeli military institution should

feel proud about. The use of internationally banned weapons, advanced U.S. war technologies, and the tools of murder and destruction in the barbaric way which Israel employed during its savage war against Lebanon for over 16 days is a criminal act and the utmost of organized, state terrorism.

AL-THAWRAH stresses that the aggressor must not go unpunished. The international community is responsible for making the Israeli politicians understand that security and stability cannot be achieved through force, aggression, and occupation.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: A just and comprehensive peace, a peace of international legitimacy — which is based on the principles of equitability [takafu'], equality, complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, and the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions — is the only real guarantee for all parties and for world security and stability.

Syria: Prime Minister al-Zu'bi Addresses May Day Rally

JN0105161296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Under the patronage of President Hafiz al-Asad, the Executive Office of the General Federation of Syrian Trade Unions held a large rally to celebrate the international labor day in the conference hall of the General Federation of Syrian Trade Union building today. Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi deputized for President Hafiz al-Asad. [passage omitted]

The rally began with a 1-minute silence in memory of the martyrs of the Arab nation and Lebanon. After that, everyone sang the Ba'th Party anthem.

Amid chants in praise of President Hafiz al-Asad, the Ba'th Party, and the homeland, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, President Hafiz al-Asad's representative, delivered the speech of the rally's patron.

Al-Zu'bi began the speech by conveying President Hafiz al-Asad's heartfelt greetings and wishes to the working class on this occasion.

He said: On May Day, we recall events and experiences. We recall mankind's hopes which go unabated everywhere, decreasing here and erupting there. Mankind's revolution and march do not stop. Its banner is bequeathed from one generation to the next with the aim of making the earth a place suitable for secure and peaceful life, where man enjoys what he can obtain from heaven and earth, from what he produces and manufactures,

contributing to a world where starvation is unknown and where fear, oppression, and exploitation are nonexistent. This is impossible to realize unless the honorable people in the world unify their strength, methods, and aims, and agree on a practicable plan to face the tyranny of the masters, the ambitions of the greedy, the violence of the powerful, and the terrorism of the dominant ones whose only concern is to spread their domination over people's resources and subject them to forms of political and economic slavery and make them satellites in science and culture. They divide the world into north, south, west, and east and into markets in which the monopolists of industry, science, and technology play the game of master and slave, leader and led, seller and consumer, and debtor and borrower.

Al-Zu'bi said that those who observe schemes being prepared against this world realize that the political, economic, and cultural imbalance is aggravating and that the distance between the advanced countries and the developing or backward countries are widening and not narrowing. Conditions of life on the globe is being viewed with contempt. He said: In such conditions, the Arabs stand on the sidelines in a manner that is not in harmony with their size, wealth, or position. Their cause is disintegrating amid narrow regional and parochial interests. They are being harmed and are being picked one by one with the aim of humiliating them. They are suffering from poverty despite their riches, great resources, and strength. They are humiliated and dismembered, becoming a soft morsel for the avaricious ones, both small and big. Their contradictions are exploited in political and economic intrigues. Thus, the pan-Arab deterioration has become a historic problem, presenting a crisis of identity and fate.

Al-Zu'bi added: Syria is aware of this pan-Arab crisis. Therefore, it is moving with all the weight its size and position affords, using its useful resources to help overcome the Arab weakness, and its self-reliance and the Arab masses' support for its stands. Syria relies on the firm national unity of its proud people and on the wisdom and shrewdness of its great leader President Hafiz al-Asad. Thus Syria is trying its best to prevent the negative effects of the Arab weakness and fragmentation from reflecting on the Arab stand, preserving its ability to resist difficult circumstance and negotiate major turning points.

Al-Zu'bi asserted that this is what made Syrian, under President Hafiz al-Asad, concentrate on building a possible Arab solidarity on the one hand and on building Syria's defense capabilities, developing its national economy, and pursuing its development, adopting a special domestic policy in which political pluralism merges with economic pluralism with the aim of attracting peo-

ple's resources and mobilizing all agricultural and industrial production abilities. Syria endeavored to find a cultural and scientific ground to help it keep pace with scientific progress, making the contribution of citizens in building the homeland the duty of the group and the individual.

Al-Zu'bi noted that the working class, in addition to the productive people, had a great role in building the political, economic, and social edifice in Syria. [passage omitted]

He said that proceeding from its principled and firm adherence to national and pan-Arab standards, Syria responded to and participated in the peace talks. It did so based on a clear pledge to hold these talks in accordance with resolutions of international legitimacy and based on implementing UN Security Council Resolutions, especially Resolutions 242 and 338 which stipulate Israel's full withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and the Syrian Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines as well as implementing Resolution 425 which stipulates Israel's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from occupied southern Lebanon.

He said: Throughout the talks, which were launched in Madrid more than four years ago, the entire world witnessed Israel's intransigent stands and continuous attempts to circumvent the formula of the Madrid conference and amend its principles in order to slip away from its obligations that would result from the realization of a just and comprehensive peace. Al-Zu'bi added: Israel's withdrawal from the last round of talks, which was held in Maryland near Washington within this context, is additional proof of its lack of seriousness and desire to achieve the desired peace.

Al-Zu'bi said that for its part, Syria proved its eagerness to achieve a just and comprehensive peace — one which restores full rights to their owners — by adhering to the Madrid formula and offering many initiatives. However, Israel did not respond to these formulas. It continued to adopt a policy of prevarication and procrastination and to indulge in obstructing the peace process. However, Israel is no longer able to deceive or to falsify facts.

Al-Zu'bi added: Israel's recent savage aggression against Lebanon proved, once again, its hostile and expansionist nature. In this aggression, Israel used a barbarous method represented by striking at the villages of southern Lebanon and killing men, women, and children and displacing them under a downpour of bombs dropped by planes and artillery shelling.

The prime minister said that the Israeli bombardment targeted hospitals, first aid centers, UN positions, electric power plants, roads, and bridges. He added that Is-

rael carried out this brutal aggression within the world's hearing and sight, disregarding world public opinion. The world was following Israel's policy of terrorism against unarmed Lebanese inhabitants, including elderly people, children, men, and women. Even stones and trees were not spared from Israel's air, land, and sea aggression in an unprecedented disdain of all international conventions and laws and internationally recognized human rights laws.

Al-Zu'bi said: On this great occasion, which brings us together today, we stand in support of the Syrian working class in its May Day celebrations, an occasion which implies the meaning of the struggle of the workers of the entire world. [passage omitted]

The prime minister saluted the Syrian working class, its trade union organization, and all productive workers wherever they are—workers, peasants, teachers, doctors, engineers and tradesmen; men and women. He also saluted our Armed Forces who are standing steadfast in their trenches to defend the homeland, protect our land and people, and strengthen our positions of steadfastness.

Concluding his speech, al-Zu'bi said: Let us hope that when we meet next May we will have achieved our higher objectives under the leadership of steadfast struggler Hafiz al-Asad, our president and the pioneer of our march. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Taliban Leader Mohammad Omar Interviewed

MM0105143396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
1 May 96 p 1

[Report on interview with Mohammad Omar Akhund, leader of the Afghan Taliban Movement, by Ahmad Muwaffaq Zaydan in Kandahar; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Kandahar — Mohammad Omar Akhund, leader of the Afghan Taliban Movement, has refused to hold any dialogue with Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani as long as the latter is in power. Mohammad Omar added in an exclusive interview with AL-HAYAH, the first of its kind since the movement emerged onto the Afghan scene in September 1994: "We do not want to sit down with (President) Borhanoddin Rabbani as long as he continues to represent that corrupt administration. We refuse to hold a dialogue with him in such a situation. When his administration collapses and when there is an opportunity to negotiate with him, we will sit down to discuss outstanding matters."

Despite the large number of questions put forward by AL-HAYAH to the person calling himself "amir of the believers" [amir al-mu'minin], Mohammad Omar's answers were very brief, and he appeared to be incapable of conducting a press interview or understanding the problems of Afghan politics. He looked for answers from the Taliban leaders sitting around. The Taliban leader is 38 and has one eye — he lost the other eye during his participation in the Afghan jihad among the ranks of the Hezb-e Eslami (Mohammad Yunis Khalis wing)

Asked whether he believes that the Afghan crisis should be resolved politically or militarily, the Taliban leader told AL-HAYAH: "If there is a solution that leads to a political settlement, we will support it as long as it can be trusted and relied on, otherwise we need a military solution."

Mohammad Omar, who was sitting on the ground in a beautiful garden in front of the Khaliphate House, formerly known as the Imarah House, appeared so simple and naive that a journalist would find it difficult to believe that he is capable of running one Afghan province. So how can he run the 15 provinces now under Taliban's control or run a state like Afghanistan, which is currently the focus of international and regional attention. On the claims made by his rival, the Afghan president, about Pakistan's intervention and support for his movement, the Taliban leader said that "these accusations are absolutely baseless and we categorically deny them." He also denied that the issue of an alliance

with the Coordination Council (opposed to the Rabbani regime) is being discussed.

On the nature of the movement's link with Iran and the visit to Tehran by a delegation from its leadership, Mohammad Omar said: "Iran's violations are clear, and they (the Iranians) are responsible for them. However, we want good relations with them and are determined to establish cordial relations, because we believe that Iran is an Islamic state. If they want to improve relations, we are ready. If they want relations to deteriorate, we are also ready."

Asked whether the agreement signed between the movement and pro-Iranian Shiite Wahdah Party is a local agreement limited to the Bamian and Kalbya provinces or whether it covers all Afghan territory, he said: "That agreement does not cover all Afghan territory at present. But we have discussed this issue with them (Wahdah Party)."

Asked whether Taliban is prepared to receive some of the Afghan Arabs opposed to their governments, he told AL-HAYAH: "We know nothing about their special circumstances, and we have not discussed this question. Such issues are discussed when they take place. But so far we have no interest in anything of that kind."

When AL-HAYAH asked the question in a different way, citing the statement made by the prime suspect in the case of the attempt on the life of President Husni Mubarak, namely that he stayed for a few days in Kandahar, he denied any knowledge of the matter. While one of the movement's leaders said: "We do not know Mustafa Hamzah. But we have some Arabs who stayed in Kandahar for some time."

Asked how decisions are made inside the movement, its leader said: "Decisions are made on the basis of conditions and circumstances and the requirements of our work. We make the appropriate decision on the basis of the circumstances."

AL-HAYAH broached the issue of the Russian prisoners held by Taliban, seven of them: four Russians, one Ukrainian, and two Tatars, whose plane, which was transporting arms and ammunition to the Afghan president, was forced to land in Kandahar last August. The movement's leader said: "Our conditions for releasing them (the prisoners) is to satisfy the Afghan nation and fully convince them about the fate of 60,000 Afghans missing since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. We have claims, indeed firm evidence and proofs, that they (the Russians) moved some of the POW's to Russia. The Russians must convince the Afghan nation about the fate of these people and tell them where they are now and whether they are dead or still held by them."

The POW's belong to the nation and the Afghan people, who must be convinced about their fate. But if they are still held by the Russians, why continue to hold them and not release them?"

Asked about the dangers of his appointment as "amir of the believers" and whether this is designed to partition Afghanistan, he just said: "I do not think so. We care about Afghan territorial integrity."

Afghanistan: Spokesman on Government's Talks With Hezb-e Eslami

LD0105180996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Afghan presidential spokesman 'Abdol Aziz Morad, speaking to BAKHTAR about talks between Afghan groups, said: To restore complete and lasting peace and stability in the country, talks with different groups have started.

With regard to the talks with Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], Morad said: Contact and talks with the opposition continue satisfactorily. We hope that the talks will become a strong foundation for the restoration of peace and stability in the country. We hope that these talks, which have thus far been satisfactory, will become a catalyst for talks with all other groups and prove to be a significant and reliable step.

On the visit by an Afghan delegation to Pakistan, Morad said to BAKHTAR: In keeping with the its peaceful policy, Afghanistan wants friendly relations with all countries, especially neighbors. On this basis, we consider friendly relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan to be in the interest of the people of both sides. As far as Afghanistan is concerned, it considers all possible efforts as beneficial in the normalization of relations between the two sides on the basis of non-interference in one another's internal affairs and mutual respect for territorial integrity and national independence. An Afghan delegation led by Transport Minister 'Abdol Ghafar Sa'em will very soon pay a visit to Islamabad at the invitation of the Pakistani authorities. [words indistinct], these kinds of talks and contacts can produce results and will be beneficial to relations between the two countries.

Afghanistan: Government Meets, Calls on All Parties To Continue Dialogue

LD0105193396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A High State Council session, chaired by Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, was held this morning.

The High State Council's secretariat reported that at the session talks were held on the country's current situation and recent developments.

The session of the High State Council regarded inter-Afghan talks as the most effective and satisfactory way for the strengthening of peace and security in the country. The session has emphasized the continuation of talks.

The High State Council recommended that the process of talks and contacts with the belligerent parties should be continued as (?fighting) and conflict would bring no other result than the realization of others' illegitimate objectives. The High State Council called on opposition parties and groups to play a patriotic role, show goodwill, and aid the restoration of peace and the reconstruction of the country bearing in mind society's immediate needs and the high Islamic and national interests.

At today's session a number of other subjects on the agenda were also discussed (?and necessary decisions were made).

Afghanistan: Government Forces Advance Into Taleban Area in Herat

LD0105150496 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] It has been reported that clashes between the Kabul administration and the Taleban have now spread to Herat Province from Ghowr. According to the report, last Sunday, Kabul administration forces succeeded in advancing to the outskirts of the Pashtun Zarghun district in Taleban-controlled Herat province. The report says that clashes are continuing in Tulak and Saghar. Saghar district is at present controlled by the Kabul administration and areas of Tulak are under Taleban control.

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar Forces Deploy Alongside Government in Kabul

MM0105152696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 1 May 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Hekmatyar Fighters Enter Kabul, Deploy Alongside Rabbani Supporters"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Peshawar, AL-HAYAH — High-ranking sources from the Afghan Hezb-e Eslami, led by Golboddin Hekmatyar, told AL-HAYAH yesterday that 1,000 Hezb-e Eslami fighters have moved to Kabul by air and are deployed alongside the government forces loyal to Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani

at the approaches of the capital to defend it against possible attacks by Taleban fighters.

The sources, which held "marathon" talks in Kabul with leaders of the Afghan regime, pointed out that the fighters who have entered the capital are under the command of the known partisan leader "Sir Katib" [as transliterated].

The deployment coincided with the blessed 'Id al-Adha and a mediation conducted by Qazi Hussain Ahmad, leader of the Jam'iyat-e Islami Pakistan, to bring views closer between Rabbani's supporters and the Hezb-e Islami, especially as the leader of the Pakistani group has good relations with the two sides.

The Afghan sources expect the Hezb-e Islami to deploy some 15,000 of its fighters to defend the capital alongside government forces. Independent informed sources who returned yesterday from Laghman, where the Hezb-e Islami leader is based, say that Hekmatyar has ordered the governor of Laghman province, Commander Abdollah Jan, to prepare 4,000 of his fighters to go to Kabul within days.

Observers do not rule out that the Rabbani-Hekmatyar forces could launch joint attacks on Taleban's positions if the latter refuses to join in as a party to a peace agreement. A reconciliation will be signed between Rabbani and Hekmatyar in the presence of leaders of the Islamic movements in the Arab and Islamic worlds. Rabbani and Hekmatyar have assigned Qazi Hussain Ahmad to invite these figures to the signing ceremony.

Afghanistan: 1 Person Dies in Rocket Attack on Kabul

LD0105162496 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Translated Text] One person was martyred and three others injured when several rockets hit residential areas in Kabul City. BAKHTAR reports that last night and today Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired several rockets into residential areas of Kabul and that, as a result, one person has been martyred and three others injured. Two houses were also damaged in the attack.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Commissioner Announces Parliamentary Elections 12 Jun

BK2704142096 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1330 GMT 27 Apr 96

[Address to the nation by Bangladeshi Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Summary] The commissioner begins his 15-minute speech by drawing his countrymen's attention to the establishment of a caretaker government following the dissolution of the parliament and of the constitutional necessity to hold fresh elections by 28 June. He stresses the need to recover illegal weapons and to suppress criminals in order to improve the law and order situation and ensure free and fair elections. He emphasizes the responsibility of the government and all others in this regard and urges the personnel who will be entrusted with election duties to perform their duty fearlessly and without succumbing to threats from anyone.

The commissioner then announces the date for the parliamentary elections. He says: "Dear countrymen, I am happy to announce that the schedule for the general elections for the parliament has been announced today. According to the schedule issued through a release (?in the country), nomination papers may be filed by 12 May 1996, and 12 June 1996 has been set as the date for the voting."

The commissioner concludes by stressing the need to ensure that the elections are held peacefully and in a transparent manner.

Bangladesh: Awami League Demands Chief Adviser Oversee Defense Ministry

BK0205081596 Dhaka DAINIK ITTEFAQ in Bengali 20 Apr 96 p 1

["Press release" issued by the Awami League in Dhaka; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] At its executive committee meeting held yesterday at the Bangabandhu Avenue party office, the Awami League adopted a resolution reiterating its demand for the immediate transfer of the charge of the Defense Ministry from the president to the chief adviser. The party said that the president has shown no confidence in the caretaker government by keeping the Defense Ministry under his control. This is contrary to the fundamental principles of parliamentary democracy and the Constitution. The meeting added that the president's maintaining charge of the Defense Ministry will tarnish the good reputation of the Armed

Forces and make them controversial. It said the president's maintaining charge of the Defense Ministry before the elections has created doubts in the minds of the people over whether it will be possible to hold free and impartial elections.

In another resolution, the meeting demanded simplification of the procedure for inclusion on the voters list. It also demanded that necessary steps be taken to prepare a flawless voters list by sending school teachers and government employees and officials to each and every house in the urban and rural areas with a view to enlisting all eligible voters who have been excluded from the voters list and to remove all fake voters from the list.

The meeting was told that the Awami League is determined to establish the rule of law in the country. The party believes in the policy that law is equally applicable to everyone and that the law should take its own course. Corruption has been patronized by the state since the killing of the father of the nation [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman] on 15 August, 1975. Laws have been promulgated to protect corrupt persons. The prime minister's secretariat issued an order to stop the probe into corruption charges against Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] ministers, MP's, leaders, and workers. This order is still in force. The meeting demanded the immediate cancellation of this order and quick and effective steps to investigate the corruption of the former prime minister, her family members, MP's, leaders, and workers. It also demanded that corrupt people be barred from participating in the elections.

The meeting expressed concern that the mischievous activities of those possessing illegal arms have still not diminished. The BNP government gave over 20,000 arms licenses to members of the youth and student fronts of the party and also to its supporters. These arms are mostly used in thefts, robberies, hijacking, highway robbery, murders, and to crush political opponents. Licenses for these weapons have not yet been canceled. The arms recovery drive is continuing at a slow pace. Identified terrorists are not being arrested. Thousands of illegal arms are still in the hands of terrorists throughout the country. The lives of the people have been taken hostage by the terrorists. The meeting demanded action against terrorists, whoever they may be, and the cancellation of their arms permits. It also called for the recovery of arms, with a view to weeding out terrorism from the society and creating an atmosphere to hold free, fair, and impartial parliamentary elections. The meeting was of the view that it will not be possible to conduct free, fair, and impartial elections by keeping political appointees both within and outside the country. It demanded cancellation of all political appointments made within and outside the country, including those in banks,

insurance companies, government, and autonomous organizations.

Bangladesh: President Comments on Transfer of Defense Ministry

BK0205112596 Dhaka THE BANGLADESH
OBSERVER in English 21 Apr 96 p 1 and 12

[UNB Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The President has no locus standi to transfer the charge of Defence Ministry and Armed Forces Division to anyone, said Abdur Rahman Biswas.

"The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Division are placed at the disposal of the President legally on the basis of the Constitution. The President has no legal power to give away this responsibility to anybody," President Biswas said talking to leaders of a political party at Bangabhaban [President House] Saturday [20 April].

His observation came in the wake of insistence by some opposition parties specially Awami League, that the charge of defence be immediately vested in the Chief Adviser of the caretaker government.

A 10-member delegation of Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (JAGPA) led by its President Shafiqul Alam Prodhan called on President Biswas at the Bangabhaban.

According to a release from the President house, the JAGPA leaders said the nation felt confident and secure as the Defence Ministry had been placed under the elected President.

Exchanging views with the President on the political situation now prevailing in the country, they highly appreciated President's initiative for prompt dissolution of parliament, formation of nonparty caretaker government and thereby ensuring transfer of power.

The JAGPA delegation drew the President's attention for, inter alia, taking positive steps in resolving the Farakka [Ganges River water sharing problem with India] problem which has been ruining the country's economy.

Talking to the delegation, President Biswas said politics should be directed towards the well-being of the people and all should actively contribute to achievement of the desired goal.

He called upon them to cooperate with the caretaker government in holding the general election in a free and fair manner in accordance with the national aspirations.

Members of the party Dr. A.K.A. Aziz, Prof. Rehana Prodhan, Selim Chowdhury, Kabirul Islam Kanchan,

A.K.M. Masud, Sadar Shahjahan, M.A. Ahad, M.A. Mannan and Khandaker Lutfar Rahman were present on occasion.

India

India: 4 'Pakistan-Trained Militants' Killed in Kashmir

BK0105053096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Four Pakistan-trained militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Mendhar sector of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir yesterday. They had intruded from Pakistan and were hiding in a forest. Four AK rifles, one pistol, eight hand grenades, five bombs, one wireless set, and a large quantity of ammunition were recovered.

The Defense spokesman told our Jammu correspondent this morning that those killed included a hard-core militant, Mushtaq, who was involved in the bomb blast at (Jatha) in November last year.

India: Punjab Police Seize Weapons Allegedly Made in Pakistan

BK0205042496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Punjab Police has recovered 20 weapons marked made in Pakistan. The police said in Chandigarh that the weapons were concealed in thick bushes on the India-Pakistan border of Dera Baba Nanak sector. Apparently they were to be used during the Lok Sabha polls to create disturbances in Punjab and also target VIP's. The miscreants could not transit these further weapons due to the prompt action by the police on a tipoff. The arms included 19 pistols, one revolver, and 37 pistol magazines — all marked made in Pakistan.

In Agartala, a tea stall owner was arrested and a Pakistan-made revolver seized from him.

India: Editorial on Khokhar's Statements on Kashmiri Elections

BK0205074696 Delhi HINDUSTAN in Hindi 30 Apr 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Khokhar's Fretting and Fuming"]

[FBIS Translated Text] High Commissioner of Pakistan in India Khokhar is behaving like a defeated army resorting to rampage to vent its frustration. His mental condition is no different. For the past five years the government he represents has been indulging in a massive disinformation campaign that the Government

of India is forcibly thrusting its laws upon the people of Kashmir. Pakistan has provided tons of money to win the people of Kashmir to its side, it made valiant efforts to mislead Kashmiri youth by all sorts of temptation and coercion. But what did it gain? It is, in fact, growing increasingly frustrated in seeing all its efforts bearing no fruit whatever. What is also adding to its despair is the possibility of not succeeding in Kashmir in the future. Kashmir has always been an integral part of India and so it will remain. As a matter of fact, Pakistan's main worry is: should the elections be completed without any disturbances in Kashmir, all efforts made thus far to mislead Kashmiri people would go down the drain. And now there is no reason why the elections should not be completed peacefully. Polling begins on 7 May, and this three-phased election in Kashmir for 6 Lok Sabha seats will soon be over. However this prospect seems most disturbing to the Pakistanis. It is quite possible that voter-turn out may be smaller in Kashmir than in other States. But even those voters would be defying the edict of the terrorists and would be going to cast their vote undaunted by the terror let loose by the outfits. And their casting votes would send the message that Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in Kashmir is increasingly losing its fangs. After the Lok Sabha elections, the State Assembly elections would take place, and eventually a popular government would be installed in Kashmir. Even the very thought of a democratic peace emerging in Kashmir is making the representative of Pakistan, Khokhar, lose his cool. It was in this disturbed state of mind that he began to allege that India was conducting a farce in the name of elections in Kashmir. He went to the extent of visualising the threat of bullets to secure victory by ballot in Kashmir and that the people would be forced to participate in the election at the point of bayonet.

Khokhar's fretting and fuming is quite understandable but the impunity with which he transgressed the limits of diplomatic etiquette and propriety is simply incomprehensible. This sort of blatant violation of diplomatic decency is definitely unpardonable. His recent statement concerning elections in Kashmir is tantamount to willful intervention in India's internal affairs. Not only a strong protest should be lodged against his impudent utterance but certain firm measures should be taken regarding Pakistan's behaviour. So far our hostile neighbour has been lying dormant like an exhausted volcano but Khokhar's statement betrayed its deep internal combustion. What is interesting is Khokhar's trying to mock India's foreign policy whereas the fact is that no other country knows better about its effectiveness than Pakistan which tasted defeat after defeat at various international fora due to India's foreign policy. Khokhar's statement is not only a charged statement of an agi-

tated mind but a carefully and cunningly worded statement flouting all diplomatic norms. Hence it needs to be protested against forcefully and immediately.

India: Pakistan's Khokhar's Comments on Elections Viewed

BK0205062796 *Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES*
in English 1 May 96 p 11

[Editorial: "Contemptible"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The reaction in India to Pakistan High Commissioner Riaz Hussain Khokhar's offensive comments on the projected Lok Sabha elections in Kashmir was needlessly sharp. Perhaps politically, and in terms of protocol, the envoy deserved the kind of rebuff that Foreign Secretary Salman Haidar administered to him. But, going by Mr Khokhar's record during his four-year stay in India, he is best ignored as he has resorted to abusive and deliberately insulting references to this country on several occasions. The merit in ignoring him lies in the fact that in so doing India will not do anything to offend the Pakistani nation whose sovereign representative Mr Khokhar is. It is for the people of Pakistan to defend or criticise their high commissioner for the vulgar and perverse manner in which he presents his nation's case in New Delhi. If they support Mr Khokhar, the envoy has actually made the task of the Indian Government and the people in dealing with Pakistan that much easier. Several national parties which have demanded the high commissioner's expulsion will be guilty of an exaggerated reaction to what essentially is a tabloid-level view. Mr Salman Haidar has made the key point by emphasising that the last entity which could lecture India on holding elections without taking into account Imran Khan's praise for the way India's Election Commission has ensured free and fair poll in this country.)

It would not be surprising if Mr Khokhar's outburst was to be eventually reckoned as having been purely personally motivated. Some think that by being abusive and offensive, he would return home a hero after a four-year stint that has seen the nadir in Indo-Pakistan relations. Such a sterile assignment is hardly going to make it easy for him to stake his claim to the foreign secretary's office. Mr Khokhar ought to be aware of that. His improper conduct should, therefore, be seen more as an expression of his sense of frustration for his singular failure to improve India-Pakistan relations even slightly. In this matter, he seems to be reflecting the frustration that Ms Benazir Bhutto's India policy has produced in her. Whether it was Mr Khokhar's indiscretion in hosting Hurriyat leaders at Pakistan Day receptions, or describing elections in Kashmir as a "farce" and a "sham", he has been a Pakistan envoy that

India could do without. However, since communication between the two countries is virtually non-existent, diplomatic antics have become quite irrelevant if not wholly unentertaining. If only Mr Khokhar had not made the offensive remarks not knowing what kind of a government of India would emerge after the elections, he would retain the chances of an assignment in this country in future with greater hopes of success. Meanwhile, Indian political parties would do well to leave protocol protests to the South Block. They should only concern themselves with influencing the shaping of a positive and fruitful policy towards Pakistan.

India: Editorial Urges Political Parties To Sustain Liberalization

BK0205062996 *Madras THE HINDU* in English
1 May 96 p 10

[Editorial: "Economic Liberalization and Centre-State Relations"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Even the critics of Dr. Manmohan Singh, Union finance minister, will agree that the 1991 economic liberalisation programme, launched by his government, has helped to ease the Centre-State relations perceptibly in key areas. Addressing the Calcutta Press Club on Sunday [28 April], Dr. Singh said that since his government assumed office five years ago, the States were having a larger share of the cake. The Centre had retained 23 per cent of the income tax collection and 43 per cent of excise duty. The balance was divided among the States. According to Mr. Singh, the States which are in financial straits now have to blame themselves for mismanagement of their resources. Also, Mr. Singh has claimed that economic liberalisation has removed several irritants.

In the pre-liberalisation era, over-centralisation of the economy had led to allegations of discrimination by the Centre against opposition-ruled States. Even the West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, a bitter critic of the Narasimha Rao regime's new economic policy (NEP), has readily conceded that dismantling of the industrial licensing system and scrapping of the freight equalisation scheme have opened up new opportunities for the industrial revival of his State. Under the earlier dispensation, political bias was often suspected in the granting of industrial licences by the Centre. The Haldia petrochemicals project is a case in point. Inexplicable delays in central clearances had led to a sharp escalation in the project costs undermining its economic viability. Deregulation of the industry has now spurred competition among the States to attract investment. Sitting of major industrial projects like steel plants are no longer guided by political considerations.

Market forces and availability of infrastructure are the factors.

Dr. Singh's claim that his government's NEP has led to the creation of over 7.2 million jobs in 1994-95 alone may seem impressive, but it is the restructuring of the Central public sector undertakings that has become a vexing issue in the eastern States like West Bengal and Bihar. The CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)]-led Left Front Government of West Bengal has reaffirmed its commitment to the public sector even when some of the State undertakings have piled up huge losses. But, ironically, Mr. Basu has been pragmatic enough to recast his government's industrial policy in the wake of deregulation of the industry by the Centre. The ambiguities observed in the approach of the National Front-Left Front combine in this respect is understandable as they are politically expedient in the prevailing electoral environment. In this context, it seems safe to assume that both the ruling and the opposition parties are unlikely to support any campaign for a return to the earlier licence-permit system. If large-scale job opportunities are to be created in the rural and urban areas, private initiative and investment need support. Awareness of this truism will oblige political parties of all hues to recast their strategies to sustain the liberalisation process.

At a time when coalitions and regionalisation of the politics are gaining ground, liberalisation of the economy will only strengthen national integration. The highly centralised politics of the past decades had only served to whip up regional sentiments. The liberalisation programme offers new economic opportunities to the States for development compatible with their resources. It will only strengthen the nation's polity. The economic ideology may undergo changes responding to the fast-changing political situation. Whatever the ideology, fiscal discipline alone will hold the key for a truly federal Centre-State ties. If the nation's political system is to be sensitive to the needs of all regions, there are few options to the liberalisation process.

India: UNHRC Report on Secessionism Called Snub for Pakistan

BK0105145796 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 1 May 96

[Commentary by G. Pancholi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The UN Human Rights Commission, UNHRC, has come out strongly against secessionist movements, which it wants to be discouraged by the international community, as the territorial integrity of states must be preserved and protected. The secretary general of UNHRC, in his report on the prob-

lems involving minorities submitted to the commission recently, has emphasized that intervention and outside action by third states which intended to impair the integrity of states were not compatible with basic principles of international law and sound principles of good-neighborliness. He stressed that solutions to minority problems had to be found within the framework of existing states. Legitimate claims by individuals and groups should normally be accommodated within the state's constitutional system by creating adequate political arrangements, structures, and procedures.

This report flies strongly in the face of Pakistan and its sponsored nongovernmental organizations, which for the past few weeks have misused the forum of the Human Rights Commission to call for secession of Kashmir from India, which has, however, gone totally unheeded. The stand taken by UNHRC has also rebuffed the All Parties Kashmir Hurriyat Conference, APKHC, which under the influence of its mentor, Pakistan, has been crying hoarse for the so-called right of self-determination to resolve the Kashmir tangle. The delegation of APKHC, hand in glove with Pakistani delegation, had been busy throughout the current sitting of the commission to malign India in the most vehement manner, saying, among other things, that elections held under Indian occupation will not be accepted by them. But, they very well overlooked the situation in Kashmir that the coming parliamentary elections have been widely welcomed by the people of the state; for as many as 110 candidates, including some former militants, are contesting for six parliamentary seats. This number is much more than that of contestants in any earlier elections held in normal times.

The interesting point is that APKHC has said nothing so far regarding the mockery of democracy being practiced on the other side of the fence in the area of Jammu and Kashmir under illegal occupation of Pakistan, where elections in genuine terms have never been held. According to the UNHRC, the starting point of a model world order was that there was no generally recognized right of secession, that state borders were not to be altered except with the consent of the parties concerned, and that weight should not be put on external self-determination. Instead, the focus must be on the creation and pragmatic development of flexible forms of internal self-determination which gave all social groups — majorities and minorities, ethnic and other groups — a fair chance of political autonomy and other forms of self-realization. When these points are put to test in the Indian context, it can be rightly claimed that Indian Constitution and its inherent democratic system has well-laid-out and well-defined framework for meeting the aspirations of people of different cultures, languages,

and religions, who have been living in this great country together for ages.

Today's world order faces all types of challenges and dangers. The rich and powerful nations have generally been blamed for creating disturbances and promoting instability in the countries of the Third World. The other day, China accused that the demand for right of self-determination is nothing but the affectation of Western countries who want to destabilize and weaken the countries who do not fall in line with them on various issues. There is no exaggeration in this charge. The recent stance of the UNHRC gains importance because till now the various units of the UN used to criticize states for violation of human rights and used to ignore the deeds of terrorist outfits, howsoever barbaric, ruthless, cruel, and inhuman they were. This is for the first time that the Human Rights Commission has strongly condemned terrorism and categorically declared that the terrorists groups, too, are guilty of violation of human rights. This is a significant development and a clear warning to Pakistan.

India: CBI Calls ISRO Espionage Case False

BK0105042496 *Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 1 May 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] says that no espionage was involved in ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization] and the case against six people, including two senior scientists, is false. In its final investigation report submitted to the Ernakulam chief judicial magistrate yesterday, the CBI said the allegations of espionage have not been proved. It further said that the accused made their confessions to the Kerala police of their involvement in the espionage activity under duress. Besides the two senior scientists, the case involves two Maldivian women and two businessmen.

India: BJP Leader Interviewed, Discusses Party Platform

BK0105030896 *Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 29 Apr 96 p 11*

[Interview with Atal Behari Vajpayee, Bharatiya Jananta Party leader, by Ambikanand Sahay in Lucknow; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Sahay] Which, in your view, is the most pressing problem the new government should tackle first?

[Vajpayee] The nation needs to restore credibility in its institution of governance first. The credibility stands shaken and shattered. Then there are other things that follow from this basic problem. Like, there should be

a clean, efficient, considerate and caring government. And the rule of the law must prevail. Elimination of corruption and controlling price rise are also some of the problems which must be tackled by the new government on a war-footing.

[Sahay] How do you describe the present state of the economy?

[Vajpayee] The economy is in a bad shape. All kinds of distortions have crept in while implementing the policy of liberalisation. The government has not been able to give up powers. So is the case with the bureaucracy. Bureaucrats want absolute power to say "yes" or "no". Delays occur and corruption is encouraged if unlimited discretionary powers are there with the government.

[Sahay] In one of your television interviews, you seemed to have almost lauded Mr Manmohan Singh. Any comments?

[Vajpayee] Because of his experience, Mr Manmohan Singh's advice would be welcome. But there is no question of Mr Singh being invited to join the new government, should we come to power.

[Sahay] Don't you think there is a contradiction between your party's Swadeshi movement on the one hand and your support for the cause of liberalisation on the other?

[Vajpayee] No. There is no contradiction. Our plank now is liberalisation at home. We will prepare the country in general, and industry in particular to meet international challenges. I am sorry to say that so far our industry has functioned in a sheltered atmosphere. It has got to be made competitive. And an improvement in quality must be there, so that we can face the world market. This is the spirit. It is not against the Swadeshi spirit which basically means instilling a feeling of confidence in people that, "yes, India can just do it". The country should not be made an isolated island. We have to live and perform in an ever-shrinking world.

[Sahay] Unlike what we saw in 1989 (Bofors days), corruption has not caught on as an issue in the ongoing elections. There are many who think that there is a tacit understanding among all political parties not to rake up this issue as leaders of all major political parties are involved in scams. Your comments?

[Vajpayee] I do not agree with the direction of the question. Hawala is indeed an issue this time.

[Sahay] When you were foreign minister, Indo-Pakistani relations had improved considerably. Should the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] come to power and you become the Prime Minister, will ties between the two countries be strengthened further?

[Vajpayee] It all depends on Pakistan's attitude. If its attitude undergoes a change for the better, things would definitely improve. On our part, there will be no big brother attitude.

[Sahay] Political parties publicise their manifestos. But once in office, a manifesto is forgotten. What do you have to say on the BJP manifesto?

[Vajpayee] We have not made any tall promises. We mean to implement what we have promised.

[Sahay] How do you visualise the post-election scenario, as even the most optimistic pre-poll surveys show that the BJP would not cross the 200-mark?

[Vajpayee] Our party is sure to get an additional 3 per cent votes (more than what the surveys show). This will make a big difference. We will achieve absolute majority. But, in case we do not get a clear majority, we will see then.

India: BJP Leader Interviewed on Election Possibilities

BK0105103096 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 29 Apr 96 p 7

[Interview with A.B. Vajpayee, leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), by special correspondent Ulka Bhadkamkar "in Maharashtra" on 26 April]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Telegraph: How does it feel to be the Prime Minister in waiting?

Vajpayee: I do not want to say anything right now. Let us wait, there are only a few days left. Nothing is certain his point although we are the front-runners.

Telegraph: Is there any event that could turn the tide against the BJP?

Vajpayee: If the National Front-Left call for the people to vote for the Congress. But they will not do that, there are so many leaders and they would never be able to get together and decide. Also, they would be politically finished.

Telegraph: Where will you get the seats from?

Vajpayee: Our tally will go up in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. The alliance between the Samata Party and the BJP has taken off and an anti-Lalu wave is sweeping across the state. In Gujarat, the number of seats will go up from the 30 we had last time because the Congress is not in a position to take advantage of the BJP's differences and our workers have closed ranks. Every day our tally is going up.

Telegraph: Congress leaders like Sharad Pawar have said that in case they do not reach a clear majority, they might seek support of regional parties. What about the

BJP? You already have three alliances, with the Shiv Sena, Samata Party and Haryana Vikas Party.

Vajpayee: In every state, the Congress is fighting a regional party. In Tamil Nadu they are in alliance with Jayalalitha's AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] so alliance with DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] is ruled out. They are fighting both Telugu Desam factions in Andhra Pradesh and they want to win at the cost of both. How will they have an alliance with either of them? Every regional party wants to ensure its victory by defeating the Congress.

Immediately after fighting, if not defeating the Congress, to join hands with it just to divide loaves and fishes will not go well with the people. So state and regional parties will have to join hands with an anti-Congress combination or front.

The other possibility is if the Congress decides to ditch Narasimha Rao (laughs, pleased with the possibility) then some regional parties may be ready to join hands with the Congress minus Narasimha Rao. But Narasimha Rao will not allow that. Kaise karega [How will you do it?], I do not know.

Telegraph: Do you see any of these regional parties joining hands with the BJP?

Vajpayee: Some of them, yes. They have been sending feelers. We are in contact with regional parties. An inner debate is going on whether to join hands with them or not; how long will that arrangement last, will it be of any permanent value.

Telegraph: Is this because of your experience in Uttar Pradesh?

Vajpayee: Yes. Unfortunately political parties in India do not know how to work together, how to work as a team. We have yet to learn the art of living together and working together... In that sense Leftists are a better lot because they are wedded to a particular ideology, one may or may not agree with that ideology. But other parties... What happened in 1979, in 1989 also? Ambition, fights over who would become the Prime Minister.

Telegraph: Does the BJP have a shadow Cabinet?

Vajpayee: Not exactly a Cabinet, but we have a team, and we have divided the ministries and departments. An informal arrangement is there since after the 1991 Lok Sabha elections. The members had to make a choice when the standing committees of Parliament were formed. They choose one particular subject, they work in that particular ministry, so they get some background. But we have only 119 MPs. If we get a majority...

Telegraph: Even in recent weeks has no thought been given to this?

Vajpayee: No, no, now we are busy with the elections. No formal exercise has been done so far.

Telegraph: How do you explain the strong presence of the BJP in Western India — Gujarat, Maharashtra, previously Rajasthan and now your growth in Goa?

Vajpayee: I do not see any special reason. Disintegration of the Congress, faster disintegration as compared to other states. Then the Nav Nirman [Reconstruction] movement was born in Gujarat and the first non-Congress government was formed here. (The Progressive Democratic Front government under Sharad Pawar in 1978.)

2 Maharashtra is the latest addition because of internal quarrels in the Congress. The people want change and whatever party they think is available to bring about change, they go with it.

Telegraph: You expressed reservation over the dissolution of the Srikrishna Commission inquiring into the post-Ayodhya riots in Mumbai [Bombay].

Vajpayee: I said I was not happy. But then the situation was explained to me and I was told that even some Muslim leaders were in favour of putting an end to the inquiry because they did not want those wounds to be opened again. But it was a decision of the state (government). We were not consulted.

Telegraph: How do you coordinate between the governments of the states where you are in power and the party high command?

Vajpayee: We have given them enough freedom and only basic policy issues are brought to our notice. On the whole, the alliance with the government in Maharashtra is doing well. Whatever the pronouncements, the conduct is all right. Manohar Joshi personally is a balanced man (laughs). Most of the ministers are new, they do not have any experience. We will face the problem at the Centre also if we are voted to power. But applying fresh minds will be an advantage.

Telegraph: The BJP manifesto is 75 pages long and covers many issues. Can you enumerate priorities?

Vajpayee: There are so many problems that require immediate attention and have to be tackled at the same time. This election is unusual, unique in the sense that one single issue does not dominate. That also indicates voters' maturity. If one area is there it is development of infrastructure. There is soon going to be a serious shortage of power. The blame will be put on the new government, that much I know.

Telegraph: Where is the money going to come from?

Vajpayee: The state's credibility to govern and govern in a fair manner has to be re-established. People are losing faith in the institution of the state. Parliament does not function, the executive does not take decisions, only the Supreme court is deciding important issues. The government shirks its responsibility, whether it is a water dispute or some other dispute, they wait and then the matter is taken to the Supreme Court. And then the government says now what can we do, you accept this. This is abdication of authority.

Telegraph: Your party is the most organised political party. How is that?

Vajpayee: Most of our members come from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and are trained to function in a disciplined manner. When others join, they also become a part of that cadre. We are a cadre-based party. Now the party has become a mass party. But the party is expanding and growing and new people require some time to adjust themselves in the party, that's why you see there is some slackness here and some problems there. Human adjustment is a very difficult job. How do you control ambition, how do you work as a team? Regular training is provided. Sometimes we succeed sometimes we don't.

Twice in a year we hold camps for two or three days for all types of workers although there is no time. Every year there are elections, if not Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, then local bodies go to the polls. So most of the time and energy is spent on organizing elections (the party manifesto says it will consider clubbing elections).

Telegraph: With an increasing number of people from the Congress joining your party, how are you going to prevent it from going the Congress way?

Vajpayee: We will have to intensify our efforts. Train our workers, ask them to follow a code of conduct, not to be power hungry. It is easier said than done. Our workers are also affected by the conduct of other parties. If they see something bad in some other party, they try to copy it. But even now we are a better lot than others.

Telegraph: Your party has a kill-joy image. Maharashtra deputy chief minister Gopinath Munde has talked of imposing prohibition, cracked down on matka gambling and soon after the alliance government took over, personally swooped on some bars and closed them.

3 Vajpayee: (Laughs) Like Haroon Rashid [prohibitionist]? Kill-joy, I do not know. Prohibition in a single state will not succeed. There will be smuggling from neighbouring states, which then becomes a business. In Maharashtra there is no ban on lottery while we have

banned it in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. The question of revenue will also arise. So let the chief ministers of all the states assemble and decide. Uniform all-India policies have to be evolved.

Telegraph: Mr Advani has a hard image while you have a more soft image. Is this like the police who team up a hard cop and a soft cop to confuse the accused?

Vajpayee: (Laughs) You think we have done it deliberately? There is no basic difference in approach or in attitude. Maybe in the way of putting things, some difference in emphasis. After all we are different personalities, what we say and how we say it will be different.

Telegraph: Why do national leaders find it necessary to contest from two different constituencies?

Vajpayee: I was reluctant to go to Ahmedabad (Gandhinagar) because the Lucknow seat is sure, but they wanted a replacement for Advaniji. Ahmedabad is a prestigious seat so my name cropped up. They thought if I fight from Ahmedabad the entire organisation will get united and work for me, and that is what has happened. Secondly, in Lucknow there are 60 candidates. It is morbid but what if one dies before the poll the election will be countermanded. That is why Narasimha Rao is also fighting from Berhampur in addition to Nandyal. The only reason is that in case of a mishap, there should not be countermanding. Otherwise there is no justification. We wanted this to be prohibited by law. There was a proposal from the Election Commission. But it did not materialise.

Telegraph: Is it not unfair to one of the constituencies, assuming you win from both?

Vajpayee: Yes. I would not have fought from two constituencies if Gandhinagar was not involved.

Telegraph: In the event of an electoral defeat of the BJP...

Vajpayee: (Cuts off the question) You mean not getting majority? There is no question of being defeated. Even if we get 200 seats we will claim we have done well. After all we have only 119 seats and that would be a quantum jump. We will say all right, let us wait for one year, the government won't last. So there is no defeat.

Telegraph: There is already talk about the Congress trying to wean away the Shiv Sena from the alliance.

Vajpayee: This is the Congress. It tries to divide all parties. They divided the Janata Party thrice, Telugu Desam was divided, Shiv Sena also. Ultimately what happened? These parties fought against the Congress with a vengeance. One of the reasons why they will be very reluctant to join hands with the Congress is that

they still remember how it tried to split them and did split them.

Telegraph: You entered Parliament for the first time in 1957. What kind of changes have you seen in parliamentary debate? People now watch, Parliament on television as an entertainment programme.

Vajpayee: Parliament is in bad shape. I do not like it, it is disgusting. I can never shout, I can never jump into the Well of the House.... I have never done that. It has become the order of the day. But this is not peculiar to Parliament, there is general deterioration.

Telegraph: Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray says the American system is better, where the President is elected and then chooses his own team. Also what of the debate regarding first-past-the-post as opposed to proportional representation?

Vajpayee: Even the presidential system has its own problems. Congress and the President at loggerheads, not allowing the Budget to be passed. No salary for three months.

Something is not wrong with the system, something is wrong with the people, the political leaders. They are in a hurry, they want to make a name and they want to make money, they are not bothered about standards.

India: Experts Say New Government Needs To Declare Nuclear Policy

*BK0105110796 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
in English 29 Apr 96 p 6*

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] When the new Central Government that emerges from these elections sits down to frame India's defence policy, its first task should be to finalise India's stand on nuclear issues as all major political parties have a unanimous new one on them.

So far India has not declared its nuclear policy and refuses to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) calling it as discriminatory and favouring only nuclear weapon states.

As the major Western nations are finalising Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is likely to be signed by the end of this year, there is an exigency in announcing our official stand on nuclear issues, say experts.

All the political parties are uniformly opposing discriminatory NPT and CTBT in their manifestos says Mr Rahul Roy Chowdhury, a defence expert at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses New Delhi.

The parties have also promised that they would campaign for a nuclear free world without any distinction between nuclear haves and have-nots, he says.

It's a positive sign that the parties have given more importance to vital security issues along with other issues in their manifestos, says a retired Naval officer.

For the first time, the election manifestos of various parties attached greater significance to sensitive defence issues indicating the growing awareness of the crucial security matters among them.

The ruling Congress, in its 1996 election manifesto, says the party's nuclear policy was geared for peaceful purposes, and it favoured a nuclear weapons free world and it would continue efforts for total and complete nuclear disarmament.

The main Opposition Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) says it would not accept a world of nuclear apartheid and the CTBT unless there is a simultaneous agreement for a time bound global elimination of nuclear weapons in their entirety.

The principal plank of our disarmament policy will be to seek complete elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide within an agreed time schedule and we would continue to oppose NPT and its adjunct CTBT, says the Janata Dal (JD) manifesto.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) says that India should remain firm in her principal refusal to sign the NPT, which permits the legitimisation of mass destruction.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM) coming down heavily on the U.S. pressure on India to sign NPT says U.S. and other nuclear powers are not prepared to work out a time frame in which they would eliminate the huge arsenal of nuclear weapons they hold.

On exercising nuclear options the BJP made it clear that it would reevaluate the country's nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons.

The Janata Dal says that it would formally give a pledge for first non use of nuclear capability against Pakistan.

On the missile issue, the BJP promises to expedite the serial production of Prithvi and make Agni-I operational for the deployment of these missiles. In addition, it said it would hasten the development of Agni-II.

The Congress which takes credit for test firing and deploying Prithvi, Nag, Akash missiles and for the successful completion of Agni project did not elaborate on the issue.

But it said we are deeply concerned that Pakistan is developing nuclear weapons unabated and in case

Pakistan persists in the development and deployment of nuclear weapons, India will be constrained to review her policy to meet the threat.

Though the present trend is a welcome one, the parties should have more concentration on defence and foreign policy issues and their observations are not in depth and many of their promises are not practical, says Mr Roy Choudhury.

BJP manifesto talks about strengthening the Air Force fleet with new generation aircraft and make qualitative and quantitative improvement in our naval capabilities.

The CPM, strongly opposing the Indo-U.S. defence cooperation, says the Indo-U.S. military cooperation pact provides the Americans ample opportunities to penetrate the Indian defence establishment.

The Congress (T) calls for a close examination and review of the entire defence scenario in the changed global context to ensure that we maintain the highest standard.

Besides making promises the parties should be alive to the Western pressure on India's nuclear stand and there is a need for an all-party consensus says Mr Roy Choudhury.

On the welfare of the ex-servicemen, the JD says that it would implement the ad-hoc increase in pensions to officers which it had announced in its earlier regime.

It also promises to make the welfare of ex-servicemen, a joint responsibility of Central and State Governments, with effective monitoring steps.

While the Congress manifesto has no mention of ex-servicemen, the BJP promises to set up hospitals for them and their welfare to be included in the concurrent list.

India: Possibility of Rao's Replacement as Congress Leader Viewed

BK0105031896 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH
in English 30 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Sudha G Tilak in Madras and Pranay Sharma in New Delhi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The possibility of the Congress falling behind the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in the Lok Sabha polls has sparked moves which could lead to Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao being replaced as party president by the former Maharashtra chief minister, Mr Sharad Pawar.

The demand for a change in leadership started gaining ground after leaders both within the Congress and those

who have been expelled from the party, began airing their views publicly.

In Madras, the former Union minister, Mr P. Chidambaram, hinted that rebel Congressmen in Tamil Nadu may return to the party after elections provided Mr Rao is removed from the helm.

Mr Chidambaram, who joined the Tamil Maanila Congress, said he expected a change in the Congress leadership after the polls. "Broad consultations" would be held with party members over merging with the Congress, he added. Fellow rebel leader, Mr G.K. Moopanar, echoed the view.

"Most of us are anti-Rao and not anti-Congress. Our endeavour is working towards ousting Mr Rao," said a Tamil Maanila Congress leader. "The old man has to be taught a lesson," said another Congress rebel.

The AICC [All India Congress Committee] general secretary, Mr Devendra Dwivedi, reacted sharply to Mr Chidambaram's statement, saying it reflected his frustration. But many other Congress haters admitted that a move was on to regroup anti-Rao forces within the Congress and outside to bring about a change of leadership.

The former Union minister, Mr Kamal Nath, said in Chhindwara a few days ago that polls were the "semi-finals" and the finals would be held later.

Opinion polls predict the BJP would be the single largest party and the Congress would be behind it. The surveys have led to a realignment of anti-BJP forces.

The name of the Vice President and Congressman, Mr K.R. Narayanan, as consensus choice for Prime Minister has been mooted by Mr V.P. Singh and Mr Jyoti Basu to keep the BJP at bay. But many Congress leaders want Mr Pawar to take over if the party emerges second.

Mr Pawar, despite maintaining that Mr Rao continues to be his leader, has over the past few months begun garnering support among young Congress MPs.

The Maharashtra Congress leader was a contender for the Prime Minister's post in 1991. But though Mr Pawar had the support of party MPs from the state, he was unable to convince others outside his state. But he has learnt his lesson. Mr Pawar is now envisaging a scenario where the Congress may end up with less than the 217 seats it got last time. The leader is wooing several important leaders in the party from various regions. He can count on support from the Madhya Pradesh chief minister, Mr Digvijay Singh, and Mr Kamal Nath, who wields considerable clout in the state. Mr Madhavrao Scindia, too, wants the prize post but he lacks the requisite number of MPs who will support him. In such

a scenario, Mr Scindia, too, may end up supporting Mr Pawar.

Mr Moopanar may lobby for extending support to Mr Pawar in the Tamil Maanila Congress. But the demand for a change in leadership will get teeth only if the Congress' tally comes down to less than 150 seats.

India: 'Elaborate' Arrangements Made for 2d Round of Elections

BK0105150096 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 1230 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The stage is set for the second phase of polling tomorrow for the elections to 204 Lok Sabha and 223 [state] assembly constituencies. There are about 6,000 candidates for the Lok Sabha and over 2,400 for assembly seats. About 300,000 polling stations have been set up. Over 22 crore voters are eligible to exercise their right of franchise.

One hundred and forty-one of the Lok Sabha seats are in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa, and Bihar, which will have the first round of polling. Fifty-four constituencies in the four states of Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, will have the second round of polling as the first round was held on Saturday [27 April]. All the nine constituencies in Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Dadar-Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu will also go to the polls tomorrow.

The prominent contestants include the Indian National Congress president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Mr. Biju Patnaik and Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan of the Janata Dal, the Lok Sabha speaker, Mr. Shivrang Patil; the president of the Indira Congress-Tiwari, Mr. Narayan Dutt Tiwari; Mr. Nitesh Kumar of Samata Party, and Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, of the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist]. The largest number of 78 candidates are in the fray from the Gonda seat in Uttar Pradesh, while Navrangpur in Orissa has only three contestants. Simultaneously, polling will take place for 140 assembly seats in West Bengal and 83 remaining seats of Tamil Nadu. Prominent personalities contesting the assembly elections in Tamil Nadu include the chief minister, Miss Jayalalitha, and the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] leader, Mr. Karunanidhi. The by-elections for the legislative assemblies will be also be held for two seats in Bihar, and one each in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, and Orissa.

Elaborate arrangements have been made to ensure free and fair elections. According to reports received from various state capitals, the law and order machinery has

been put on maximum alert and security has been beefed up in the sensitive areas. Vigil along the state and international borders have been stepped up. A number of antisocial elements and miscreants have been taken into preventive custody to ward off incidents of booth capturing and impersonation.

India: Kerala Governor Resigns, Mentioned in Bribery Scam

BK0105160796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Kerala governor, Mr. P. Shiv Shankar, has resigned. Our Tiruvananthapuram [Trivandrum] correspondent reports that the resignation letter has been faxed to the president for acceptance this evening. The resignation followed the remarks made by the Supreme Court today in connection with the hawala [illegal money transfer] case.

In the resignation letter, Mr. Shiv Shankar however denied of having any connection in the scandal. He said he had no monetary involvement with Mr. S.K. Jain in any form. Mr. Shiv Shankar said his position was brought to the notice of the prime minister and the home minister. Mr. Shiv Shankar assumed charge as Kerala governor in November last.

Earlier, the apex court had observed that if the constitutional immunity to governors was the only impediment in proceeding against the Uttar Pradesh governor, Mr. Motilal Vora, and the Kerala governor in the hawala case, it would pass the necessary order on Wednesday next. The observation by the three-judge division bench came when the solicitor general, Mr. Deepankar Gupta, informed the court that investigations against the two governors is substantially complete and the only impediment in proceeding against them is the immunity granted to them under Article 361 of the Constitution.

The bench headed by Mr. Justice J.S. Verma, was also informed that the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] has launched separate investigations to find out the involvement of a new list of persons in the hawala case, apart from those named in the Jain diaries. The new list finds a mention in the computer floppy disk seized by the CBI during a raid in January this year.

Meanwhile, the CBI has filed charge-sheets against two more top officials in the designated court for their alleged involvement in the hawala scandal. They are a former managing director of Durgapur Steel Plant, Mr. Prakash Bhatia, and a former executive director of NTPC [National Thermal Power Corporation], Mr. C. Narainaswamy. With this, 16 officials have so far been charge-sheeted in the case.

The CBI today told a designated court in the capital that prima facie there is sufficient evidence to prosecute the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, in the hawala case. Opening the arguments, the CBI counsel said it has recorded statements of some witnesses who had corroborated the payments made to Mr. Advani as mentioned in the Jain diaries. The arguments by the prosecution will continue tomorrow.

India: Uttar Pradesh Governor Resigns Over Money Scam

BK0205031096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Uttar Pradesh governor, Mr. Motilal Vora, has resigned. He sent his resignation letter to the president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, last night. Disclosing this to newsmen in Lucknow, Mr. Vora said he has resigned to uphold the dignity of high office as his name figured in the hawala [illegal money transfer] scam. Mr. Vora denied the charges framed by the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] against him.

As reported, the Kerala governor, Mr. P. Shiv Shankar, also resigned last night following the Supreme Court's remarks against him in the hawala case. The governors of Uttar Pradesh and Kerala resigned within hours of the CBI informing the Supreme Court that charge sheets were substantially complete for being filed against both of them.

India: Repolling Held; Campaigning for 2 May Elections Ends

BK3004135296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Repolling in 447 polling stations in six states was by and large peaceful today. A spokesman of the Election Commission said in New Delhi this evening that brisk polling was reported from Haryana and Assam, where 50 to 55 percent votes were polled by 1530 in the afternoon. He said barring one incident of group clash between the two factions of the Telugu Desam Party at Nandigama assembly segment of Vijayawada, in which one person was killed, no untoward incident was reported from anywhere.

Campaigning for the second phase of elections in 204 Lok Sabha constituencies and 224 assembly seats came to an end this evening. These constituencies spread over 17 states and union territories will go to polls on Thursday [2 May]. There are about 6,000 candidates for Lok Sabha. Over 22 crore voters are eligible to exercise their right of franchise. [passage omitted]

In Gujarat, over 2,600 polling booths have been identified as hypersensitive and over 5,800 as sensitive. This

was stated by the election commissioner, Mr. G.V.G. Krishnamurthy, at Ahmedabad today. He said 55 companies of central paramilitary forces will be deployed in the state for the 2 and 7 May polling. Over 27,000 persons have been taken into custody as a precautionary measure.

In Maharashtra, special preventive measures, including helicopter surveillance, are being taken up in about 1,000 sensitive polling stations during the elections next month. The chief electoral officer, Dr. D.K. Shankaran, told newsmen in Mumbai (Bombay) that about 725 of the sensitive stations are in Gadchiroli District. He said over 23,500 persons have been taken into preventive custody so far and about 17,000 arms have been surrendered to the police authorities. Dr. Shankaran said 248 complaints of breach of moral code of conduct have been received.

In Arunachal Pradesh, eight companies of central police force are being deployed in the sensitive areas during the polling on Thursday. About 6,000 forest guards will assist the state police in maintaining law and order. The state chief electoral officer, Mr. Chandra Mohan, told our Itanagar correspondent that all election materials and poll staff on duty have already reached their respective stations.

India: Second Phase of Elections Begins Amid Tight Security

BK0205051696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The second phase of polling has begun for 204 Lok Sabha and 223 assembly seats. Over 22 crore voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in about 300,000 polling stations set up in 17 states and union territories. The political fortunes of about 6,000 candidates will be decided for the Lok Sabha and of about 2,400 for the assemblies.

The state governments have made elaborate security arrangements to ensure free and fair polls. Our correspondents in various state capitals report that police and home guards have been deployed and the law and order machinery has been beefed up in sensitive areas. Vigil along the states and international border has been stepped. A number of antisocial and miscreants have been taken into preventive custody.

We now take you to Patna to describe the early poll scene by our correspondent:

[Begin recording] Polling in 20 Lok Sabha constituencies has started amidst tight security arrangements to instill confidence among the voters. The jawans [enlisted men] of Bihar Police and paramilitary forces are ex-

tensively patrolling the areas. Patrolling by the jawans across the river through boats has also been intensified as the polling going in 20 seats are surrounded by Ganges, Kosi, and Gandak Rivers.

This is Ashoke Sinha reporting from North Bihar. [end recording]

In Uttar Pradesh, reports from various districts indicate that polling is slowly picking up. Our correspondent, who went round several polling booths in the capital, Lucknow, reports:

[Begin recording] Long queues were seen outside the polling booths much before the polling actually began. Women voters at several polling stations outnumbered the men voters. It appears that they want to avoid the rising mercury of the day. Great enthusiasm among the youth and the women voters is evident as they are coming in the festive mood to cast their votes. Reports from rural areas indicate that the voters are in hurry to cast their votes at early hours to get on with harvesting of rabi [spring] crop.

This is Munnal reporting from Lucknow. [end recording]

Reports of moderate polling have come in from Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. Here is a report from our correspondent:

[Begin recording] In the industrial and port city of Vishakhapatnam, polling started on a moderate lines and voters started queuing up in large numbers at the polling booths. The city mayor was among the early voters. Police has provided special protection to the polling personnel in the Naxalite-infested tribal areas. Special pickets have been set up in the identified 276 hypersensitive places in the north three coastal districts — Vishakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam.

P.N. Rao reporting from Vishakhapatnam. [end recording]

In West Bengal, paramilitary forces have been deployed in all the sensitive spots. The entire international border has been sealed to prevent from infiltration. AIR Calcutta correspondent reports:

[Begin recording] Polling began in a pleasant atmosphere as temperature dropped sharply following rains last night. In the first phase of elections today, over 2 crore 20 lakh voters are expected to cast their franchise comprising 20 parliament and 140 assembly seats. It covers 12 districts spreading from snowcapped Himalayas of Darjeeling down to riverine South Bengal.

This is Sunnit Chakroberty reporting from Calcutta. [end recording]

By-elections of one assembly seat each in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, and Orissa, and two in Bihar are also being held simultaneously this morning. Today's polling partially covers the Lok Sabha seats in Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, and West Bengal. This marks the completion of voting for the Lok Sabha in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Dadra-Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu. It will also complete the elections to the Tamil Nadu assembly. Polling for (Modakalucchi) assembly seats in the state is scheduled for the first of next month. The elections for the Belgaum Lok seat in Karnataka and Nalgonda in Andhra Pradesh have been postponed on administrative grounds.

Prominent contestants include the prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao; the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee; Mr. Biju Patnaik and Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan of the Janata Dal; the Lok Sabha speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil; the president of the Indira Congress-Tiwari, Mr. Narain Dutt Tiwari; Mr. Nitesh Kumar of the Samata Party; and Mr. Somanath Chatterjee of the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist]. Prominent personalities contesting the assembly elections in Tamil Nadu include the chief minister, Miss Jayalalitha, and the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] leader, Mr. Karunanidhi.

The Jammu and Kashmir governor, Mr. K.V. Krishna Rao, toured some remote hilly areas of Udhampur District to review the security and poll arrangements. Addressing people at Nahore, Dhur, and Devalmarg, he said nobody will be allowed to disrupt the election process as the state government is committed to restoring democracy in the state.

The poll process for the two Lok Sabha seats in Arunachal Pradesh is hampered because of incessant rains and bad weather in almost all parts of the state. Our Itanagar correspondent, Ramnitkant Sharma, after visiting some areas in and around the state capital reports that the inclement weather has affected voting resulting in low turnout in the morning.

India: Left Front/National Front Alliance Seen Ill-Fated

96AS0018B *Calcutta BARTAMAN in Bengali*
31 Mar 95 p 9

[Article by Atun Bhattacharya: "Will the Alliance Between Laloo, Mulayam and Jyoti Hold?"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The agreement between Laloo and Mulayam is an alliance between two shrewd people. Jyoti Basu mediated this alliance, but the result may not last. Laloo and Mulayam and their parties—

Janata Dal [JD] and Samajwadi Party [SP], respectively, both have Muslims and the Yadav community as vote banks in Hindi speaking Northern India. Jyoti Basu may not know this, but the Laloo-Mulayam alliance may disappear at any moment and the electoral understanding between Laloo-Mulayam-Jyoti may collapse at any time. In fact, their alliance may break soon after the election. This kind of alliance cannot be permanent. There was indication of cracks in the alliance in the very beginning. [passage omitted on JD-SP attempts to ally with the Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP]

Laloo attended the Left Front meeting in the Brigade Parade ground in Calcutta on 24th March. It was here that Jyoti Basu gave him the advice to take a lesson from the 19 year long unity of the leftist parties in West Bengal and suggested an understanding with Mulayam in order to defeat the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] and Congress as well as in building the third front. Jyoti Basu, of course, did not explain to Laloo how the Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPM] treats the other parties of the left front—the Communist Party of India [CPI], the Revolutionary Socialist Party [RSP] and the Forward Block [FB] etc... These parties are almost like servants to the CPM. Whether it was the advice of Jyoti Basu or pressure from pro-Mulayam leaders like Ramvilas Pashwan, Laloo agreed to come to understanding with Mulayam. On 24th March, returning from Calcutta to New Delhi, Laloo agreed to the electoral alliance with the SP, accepting the latter as its big brother in Uttar Pradesh [UP]. Mulayam rejected Janata Dal's demand for 39 parliamentary seats in UP and offered only 16. Laloo had to accept this offer grudgingly. Laloo, the lion of Bihar politics, had to retreat like a rat after following the advice of Jyoti Basu.

When the question of division of seats in Bihar came up, Laloo took his revenge on Mulayam. Mulayam asked for some parliamentary seats in Bihar from Laloo, especially the Purnia seat for his loyal follower Pappu Yadav. Pappu Yadav is a leading terrorist mafia leader in the Hindi belt. Laloo bluntly said to Mulayam that no seat would be given. So it came to pass that the lion of Uttar Pradesh became a rat in Bihar. Thus both lions were wounded at the very beginning of the alliance. There are many people waiting for the opportune moment to take revenge. After the election, a fight may break out between Laloo and Mulayam supporters.

It is known in New Delhi that Jyoti Basu, Harkissen Singh Surjit and the CPM leadership played the role of honest broker in building the third front. Actually, Jyoti Basu and the CPM leadership are suffering from BJP phobia. This is the reason why Jyoti and Surjit took the initiative for a Laloo-Mulayam alliance. The CPM lead-

ership's calculation is that a Laloo-Mulayam alliance can prevent the forward march of BJP, especially in UP. If BJP's inroads in UP is stopped, BJP's hope to capture the government in New Delhi will slip away. It was the objective of CPM to create an electoral understanding between Laloo and Mulayam in UP by any means. A kind of political opportunism got Jyoti Basu involved in this alliance between Laloo and Mulayam. Jyoti Basu has always been a snob and sophisticated political leader. He favors elite politics within and outside of CPM. Jyoti Basu possess no great admiration for either Laloo or Mulayam. He had never any high respect for them, nor he has now. In fact, Jyoti Basu looks down upon these leaders. Many leaders of Left Front parties told me that in discussions with them, Jyoti Basu's views on these leaders were clearly exposed. Still today, within and outside of the party, Jyoti Basu usually remarks that the alliance between Laloo and Mulayam cannot last. It may break tomorrow. As water and oil cannot mix, Jyoti Basu and Laloo-Mulayam cannot mix together. Jyoti Basu is a London educated barrister turned communist leader. In his student life in London, he was associated with Feroze and Indira Gandhi. On the other hand, Laloo and Mulayam came up from backward communities within the Hindi belt. They are not foreign-trained, nor are they London-trained communists. They are the disciples of Rammonohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan. Mulayam and Laloo's political life began with the anti-English and anti-communist socialist movement in the Hindi belt. Before coming to politics, Mulayam taught in a rural college and used to wrestle. Laloo, before entering into politics, used to graze buffaloes and is the father of ten children. These kinds of life experiences cannot even enter the day dreams of a London-trained-communist leader like Jyoti Basu. The political language used by Laloo-Mulayam is not understood by Jyoti. In other words, there is no similarity between the political idioms of Jyoti and Laloo-Mulayam and they are completely different in their political temperments. Laloo and Mulayam support caste-oriented politics, Jyoti cannot do the same. Jyoti Basu knows this. While Jyoti will go to relax in posh and sophisticated clubs and places, Mulayam will go to wrestle and Laloo will put some raw tobacco in his mouth and gossip. They belong to different poles in their social, political and personal life-styles. So they may make an alliance for political gain, but it cannot last. They cannot walk closely on the same road. Jyoti Basu knows these things quite well. In order to stop BJP, however, Jyoti and CPM leadership are willing to use last resorts. CPM does not fear Congress as Congress is such a loosely knitted party that anything can be done at the expense of that party. But CPM is frightened of BJP and know they do not have the strength to oppose them. Laloo and Mulayam have

that strength. Mulayam proved it in the election of 1993 when he came to power in Uttar Pradesh after defeating BJP. Laloo showed the courage to arrest L.K. Advani, the leader of BJP. Laloo has been in power in Bihar for six years now.

BJP does not respect CPM, but considers Laloo and Mulayam with respect. Jyoti and Surjit's political calculation is —Laloo-Mulayam's caste based politics can work to prevent the religion oriented politics of BJP. CPM leadership, including Jyoti and Surjit, has long since abandoned Marx's theory of class struggle and emancipation of the proletariat. Now they are trying to use the caste-based politics of Laloo-Mulayam to prevent the religious threat from BJP. CPM has no power to fight against the BJP. Nobody cares about CPM in the Hindi belt. So Jyoti Basu & company mediated the alliance of Laloo and Mulayam for the purpose of immediate gain knowing well that it will not last.

Whoever will be the prime minister will have to depend upon Jyoti Basu to remain in power. That will present a good opportunity to fish in troubled waters. Moreover, a situation may arise where Laloo Prasad and Mulayam Singh propose the name of Jyoti Basu for prime ministership. CPM does not care whether the alliance between Laloo and Mulayam lasts or not. The advancement of BJP can be stopped and the increase of bargaining power of CPM will be secured. It does not appear that CPM leadership is anxious to develop their party organization in the Hindi belt, taking advantage of the Laloo-Mulayam alliance. Thus, we have a marriage of convenience. The alliance of Laloo-Mulayam-Jyoti is based purely on political opportunism without any common principle or political agenda. This is the only reason CPM joined the alliance. CPM had rejected in advance any proposal for joint principles, a joint agenda or a joint manifesto with the Janata Dal and Samajwadi Party. Harkissen Singh Surjit declared in advance that CPM would have only seat adjustments with the parties in the alliance. This made the policy of opportunism of CPM more clear. It was proved that the basis of this alliance is purely temporary political opportunism without any solid principle. Jyoti Basu and CPM know that this alliance will not last as no alliance can last without a unified principle or agenda. After maintaining the Left Front for 19 years, CPM must have, at a minimum, this political wisdom.

Let us come back to the Laloo-Mulayam alliance. For the future of this alliance, we should look back through the political career of Mulayam Singh. During 1989-90 Mulayam was in the Janata Dal. In 1990, Mulayam sided with Chandra Shekhar, broke away from the Janata Dal and organized the Samajwadi Janata Dal with Chandra Shekhar. When Chandra Shekhar got ousted

from power in 1991, Mulayam left him and organized his Samajwadi Party. Is there any guaranty then, that Mulayam will not betray Laloo Prasad? The UP state unit of the Janata Dal is dissatisfied with Mulayam for giving them only 16 seats. They will pressure Laloo Prasad to come out of the alliance with the Samajwadi Party. If Laloo Prasad does not agree, they may break away from the party. On the other hand BJP and Kanshi Ram of the BSP will wait for a chance to break the alliance. Moreover, Mulayam is skilled at collecting members from other parties. After becoming chief minister in 1993, he took MLAs out from both Janata Dal and CPI. So it is very difficult if not impossible to keep the Laloo-Mulayam alliance in tact. Actually, the Laloo-Mulayam-Jyoti alliance is nothing but the prime example of opportunism in electoral politics this year.

India: Relations Between Mulayam, Laloo Seen as Fragile

96AS0018C Calcutta BARTAMAN in Bengali
31 Mar 96 p 9

[Article by Ashish Ghosh: "Two Yadavs and Guruji"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] It was September 1994, tension pervaded the Hindi belt due to the titanic clash of the egos of two Yadav leaders. Both Yadavs were considered heroes for upholding social justice and secularism. Both were socialist and opposed the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] and Congress. But there was a big difference between them. Their statements and counter statements were appearing in the newspapers. Mulayam called a press conference in the Governor's House in Patna. After few questions and answers, Mulayam went straight to the matter; he said that there was lack of law and order in the state and that Bihar was going down hill. It was the first visit of the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh to Bihar. He was in Bihar for a day and half. After a public meeting he was able to bring to his party a senior socialist leader, Ramsundar Das along with controversial mafia toughs Taslimuddin and Pappu Yadav. During that one and half day, Laloo Prasad did not meet with Mulayam. After Mulayam left for Lucknow, Laloo said in reply, "First manage your own home. Correct the conditions of Uttar Pradesh before criticising the conditions of Bihar." The condition became worse after two months. As an election in Bihar was drawing close, the number of Mulayam's special flights increased. He used to come three to four times in a month. A rumor was spread that Mulayam was going to share the Muslim vote-bank. Ramdeo Yadav, once a loyal follower and a minister in Laloo's cabinet, joined the Samajwadi Party [SP] of Mulayam. At that time, West Bengal Fisheries minister Kiranmoy Nanda used to visit Patna regularly and held meetings with mafia

don Pappu Yadav of Purnia and veteran socialist leaders in search of a plan to oust Laloo Yadav from power. Mulayam gave anti-Laloo speeches in the meetings in Bihar with the objective of getting a share of the Muslim and Yadav vote-bank of Laloo Prasad. Laloo went to Uttar Pradesh on behalf of Janata Dal [JD] to campaign against Mulayam. After that election, Mulayam formed the government with Kanshi Ram-Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP]. Many people hold that the clash of egos between these two socialist leaders began at this time.

Whatever maybe the main reason of their conflict, non-Congress [non-BJP] leaders have consternated over the clash of the two Yadav leaders. Jyoti Basu's situation was actually precarious. Mulayam went to Calcutta to brief Jyoti and on the other hand Laloo also tried to convince him. The mediator Jyoti Basu tried to convince Laloo to come to an understanding with Mulayam. But Laloo did not agree at that time. As a result, the future of the third front became uncertain.

After the election in Bihar last April, it appeared that Laloo became the absolute winner and all other candidates including those of Mulayam's were wiped out. Only Pappu Yadav managed to get elected in the parliamentary by-election from Purnia and two other candidates of Mulayam won in the assembly. After the election the self-satisfied Laloo wanted to know—"Where is Mulayam?" Many people thought that after this, the ego-battle between these two Yadav leaders would end and they would come to an understanding. Whenever a proposal came for an understanding with the Samajwadi Party, however, Laloo and his supporters like Sharad Yadav and Ramvilas Pashwan were opposed. Even though Laloo used to call Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPM] leader Jyoti Basu "guruji", Basu failed to convince him to come to an understanding with Mulayam. The question of Laloo-Mulayam Entente became more complicated after the Bihar election. Former prime minister V.P. Singh also failed to bring together these two Yadav leaders. CPM leader Harkissen Singh Surij once threatened Janata Dal that if it did not form an alliance with the Samajwadi Party, CPM would leave the third front, but to no avail. [passage omitted on failed attempt to include BSP in an alliance]

In the coming election if Congress or BJP does not get majority in parliament, this third force will come up in the national political scene. Laloo has already started to dream of forming the government in Delhi. After being involved in millions of rupees' scandal regarding animal husbandry, Laloo began to say that the upper caste forces are trying to darken his image as he may become the prime minister. Another Yadav, Mulayam, having been ousted from power by the treachery of BSP

leaders, also remembers 1994. Mulayam though, has fallen behind Jyoti Basu and far behind Laloo Prasad in the race to lead a third front.

India: Bengal Congress (I) Said Self-Destructing
 96AS0019A *Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA*
in Bengali 5 Apr 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Suicidal Congress"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Immediately after the completion of the task of nominating party candidates in the coming parliament and state assembly elections in West Bengal, the factional conflict of the state Congress party became nakedly exposed. Due to this factional rivalry, the state party leaders were not able to decide on the list of candidates unanimously, even after working on it for ten days under the mediation of the party high command [in New Delhi]. When the official list of candidates was published at the last moment, the last date of filing nomination was reached. While the high command was almost relieved and assumed that the final list appeared to be satisfactory for both the factions, one factional leader Mamata Bandyopadhyay decided to stay out of the election opposing the names of four candidates in the list. Those four candidates obviously did not belong to her group and were loyal to the other factional leader Somen Mitra. It appears that Mamata at the last moment staged this drama of putting pressure on the high command in order to save face and to keep the loyalty of her group in tact. Now, everyone is relieved that Mamata changed her decision not to contest the election. The intensity of the factional rivalry of the Congress party has not disappeared, though. The official party candidates faced obstruction in filing their nominations in many districts. The supporters of rival groups belonging to Mamata and Somen, depending on which is most powerful in a particular place, obstructed the filing of nomination of the official party candidate of the opposing group. In some places, the official candidates have had to take police protection to file their nominations. Official party candidates were not able to file nomination at least in three constituencies, and in those cases the aggrieved unofficial candidates have become candidates of the party. In some places, candidates were physically manhandled and almost everywhere unofficial candidates filed parallel nominations to official candidates. One thing has become clear from the selection of party candidates and the filing of nominations; there is no political organization named Congress in West Bengal. Here there are two different parties — Mamata Congress and Somen Congress. These two parties are not political organizations, but assemblies of loyal supporters. Any organization must have some discipline, hierarchy and minimum

conditions for getting party membership. But those are absent in both the Mamata Congress and Somen Congress. As a result, the work of the ruling Left Front has become easier and it seems that they do not have to work hard to defeat Congress. The way Mamata Congress entered the field to defeat Somen Congress and vice versa, the Left Front can just leave the field and sit in the stadium to watch the game. Their victory is assured at the end of the day. The central leadership of Congress party tried to project these two different Congress parties in the state as a single political party. After seeing the equal representation of two groups in the list of candidates and from the initial reaction of the leaders of the two factions, it appeared that Delhi's attempt was going to succeed. But that possibility was destroyed by the supporters at the grass-roots level. The ordinary voters of the state will remember the unruly activities that took place centering the filing of the nomination papers. If the voters, at the time of casting their votes, think that these people who fight like this on nominations will fight even more if they get in power, they cannot be blamed. If they chose stability over a change that might bring anarchy, they cannot be blamed.

In these circumstances, the high command or the central leadership has one choice; they must punish those people who obstructed official candidates from filing nomination papers and who stood in the election against the party candidates. But there is a difficulty in this; all the local party leaders from district to block level will get involved and the situation might degenerate to the point where there may not exist any leaders below the level of state leadership. The quarrelsome and suicidal Congress leaders of the state have nearly destroyed the party, the high command might as well make a formal declaration to that effect.

India: Mamata Bannerjee Said Sabotaging Congress (I)

94AS0019B *Calcutta BARTAMAN in Bengali*
 6 Apr 96 p 6

[Article by Jayanta Ghoshal: "Mamata's Mistaken Politics Helping CPM"]

[FBIS Translated Text] What Mamata Bandyopadhyay is doing on the eve of elections in West Bengal cannot be seen as part of an anti-Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPM] movement. Mamata's place as the central figure within the factional conflict of Congress (I) in West Bengal surprised the leaders in New Delhi. The prime minister, who has great affection for Mamata and who told Devendra Dwivedi, the general secretary of All India Congress Committee [AICC], a few days ago that Mamata is the queen of

Jhansi. Rao is reportedly annoyed by her activities. Mamata has been known to us till recently as the symbol of the (Bengali) anti-CPM movement. Still today, school teachers, clerks, shop owners, housewives and ordinary citizens of towns and villages of West Bengal consider Mamata as a courageous, honest and spirited leader who does not compromise with the CPM and who does not participate in politics for any personal gain. What are we seeing today? Mamata is saying publicly that if some persons are not dropped from the nomination list, she will not contest the election. With this public statement, Mamata threatened the party high command and played the game of political bargaining. Whether she will win or lose in this game is a different matter. It is true that criminals should not be given party nominations. But when Mamata made a public statement on this matter on the eve of elections there was no doubt that it would help CPM. Mamata's statements are already in distribution in the form of CPM posters and banners. If Mamata is serious about fighting Jyoti Basu and wants to end the rule of CPM in this state, she should not have gone public with such clamor. I talked with some top ranking leaders in Delhi and found that they also feel that Mamata's 'drama' will ultimately strengthen the hands of CPM. One officer of the intelligence department remarked that Mamata has no idea how far she has damaged the interest of her party. It may help her own publicity, but it will not help the state Congress.

Now I want to say a few words regarding the inclusion of criminals in the nomination list. It is nothing new for the Congress (I). Though this is an unfortunate matter, it can be seen in any list of candidates of any party in India. If this situation is to be changed, we need a total overhaul of the social system. Mamata does not have the power to do it by herself. Still it is praiseworthy that she talked about the politics of values and demanded the dropping of criminals from the nomination list. But the point is; why did she show more interest in raising the issue in the news media than discussing the matter with her party leadership? Does it mean that she is more interested in projecting herself differently than actually dropping those candidates from the list? It is not true that Congress high command does not give Mamata proper importance. This time Mamata was given considerable weight in making the list of party candidates. The high command did not form a committee making Somen Mitra the chairman, but formed a core group including Mamata. Mamata and Somen held meetings in the screening committee for selecting candidates. Mamata did not give any indication to Somen, Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee or AICC general secretary Devendra Dwivedi that her main demand was to drop those four candidates from the list. After everything was settled and AICC declared the

list of candidates, Mamata went to Calcutta and started clamoring on the issue.

Mamata could have come to Delhi and talked with the leadership. She could have met with the prime minister and made her points clear to him. She went to the prime minister before to get Subrata Mukherjee the Chowrangee constituency which, some say, was her tribute to her political guru. Similarly, she could have taken the issue to the highest leadership of the party. Before informing the prime minister or the central party leadership, she gave fiery statements in the newspapers which simply encouraged the CPM and the Left Front. The honest anti-CPM Mamata Bandyopadhyay we know of and admire is not the same person who misuses her power over so small and petty issues. While many criminals and mafia types are fighting elections for the CPM, Mamata, instead of campaigning against them, started campaigning against the candidates of her own party. We do not know this Mamata Banerjee. Does she not realize that her activities are helping the CPM in the coming election? Mamata knows so many things in politics, why does not realize this is a mystery to me.

Many people have started campaigning against Mamata. Some theories have arisen as to why she has taken this course of action;

1. As no candidate has won twice from the south Calcutta constituency, so the possibility is that Mamata may not win and wanted a way out of the election

2. Mamata had an electoral understanding with CPM to make sure that she does not get defeated in south Calcutta constituency. It is difficult for me to believe that a courageous and honest leader like Mamata would play into the hands of CPM. Why would CPM help Mamata to win, she who has been working so hard to weaken the base of CPM in the state?

3. Mamata has an understanding with Siddhartha Ray. Why did Mamata work so hard in Delhi to get a ticket for Siddhartha Ray? He will never fight against CPM and his close personal friend is Jyoti Basu. In the meeting of the core group, in a hot exchange of arguments with Jinal Abedin, Mamata said that if Siddhartha Ray is not given ticket for the Baharampur constituency, she would leave her Calcutta south constituency for him. Does this fondness for Siddhartha Ray match with her strong anti-CPM stance? It is puzzling.

Mamata has a tremendous political credibility in the state. The ordinary people and the Bengali middle class trust Mamata. When Mamata declares that Congress gave nomination to criminals, people will believe her. What will be the result? Somen Mitra may get discred-

ited by this tactic, but the CPM will profit. What can Mamata Bandyopadhyay say about this?

India: Siddhartha Ray Said Colluding With CPM

96AS0019C Calcutta BARTAMAN in Bengali
7 Apr 96 p 6

[Article by Barun Sengupta: "The Game Behind the Destruction of Bengal's Congress Party"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The damage done by the leaders of the West Bengal Congress to themselves is unprecedented. They not only ruined their political careers and damaged the interests of their party, but they betrayed hundreds of thousands of ordinary Congress workers and people of this state. After the [relatively successful] municipal elections, the ordinary Congress workers and the people of the state had hoped that the power of the Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPM] would be checked in the next parliament and assembly elections. If CPM could not be defeated, at least their power would be drastically reduced. The pride of Jyoti Basu would be broken and the monopoly of power on Alimuddin Street [Bengal State Assembly Headquarters] would end. But alas! before the election campaign began, the leaders of the West Bengal Congress started to act in a way which has no precedence. Some of the leaders of all levels of the party began to act in a crazy way. I have been reporting [Bengal] state politics for forty years, but I have never seen such a deadly and nasty rivalry for party tickets in the state. I have seen some kind of problems in Congress party on the eve of election, especially after Mrs Indira Gandhi monopolized the party. But I have never seen what I am seeing today. Before Mrs. Gandhi came to power, this kind of atmosphere did not exist in Congress. In spite of difference of opinion, there was discipline in the party. There was an agenda and an internal democracy. At that time, the district committees sent a list of candidates to the state committee and the state committee gave their opinion on the list of district committees. The list submitted by the district committees along with the comments of state committee then were sent to the all India parliamentary board which finalized the list. In a few cases, parliamentary board chose candidates out of the list of the district committees.

Now, the power of distribution of tickets depends on the position of the person in the party hierarchy. The district and state committees have no power. Due to this, Pranab Mukherjee, Somen Mitra and Mamata Banerjee were able to distribute the tickets in West Bengal. Nobody got a Congress ticket in West Bengal without the blessings or support of one of these three persons. With the recommendation of these three persons many

people got tickets who had no previous connection with the Congress, many in fact, who maintain connections with the Left Front. As a result, there was naturally resentment in the lower level of the party. The sad part of it is some leaders provoked their supporters to create trouble. It was seen that the leaders would lobby for one candidate in Delhi, but said different things to their supporters in the state. In spite of all of these, there might not have been so much trouble in West Bengal had prime minister Narasimha Rao not allowed Siddhartha Ray to enter this election.

Pranab Mukherjee took the initiative to make arrangement for the distribution of tickets in a peaceful way. He started discussions separately with Somen and Mamata four to five months ago. His plan was to make a list with these two leaders in advance and then get it passed by the high command. Pranab decided that Somen would be responsible for the party's organization. But Pranab probably did not know when he was making a master plan for elections in West Bengal that Siddhartha Ray was also making plans in Washington. Pranab's objectives were to weaken the power of CPM in the state, increase the number of Congress MPs and MLAs from the state and thereby strengthen his political weight at the Center. Siddhartha's objectives were completely different. Firstly, he wanted to become a member of the parliament. Secondly, he wanted to get a few loyal MPs from the state so that in case of a hung parliament, he might edge out Narasimha Rao and become the prime minister with the help of Leftists. To achieve these goals, Siddhartha first made friends with Mamata and Jyoti Basu. He needed Mamata to get to parliament and he needed Jyoti to get the help of the Left in the case of a hung parliament. Entering into the field with this plan, Siddhartha was able to win over Mamata very easily. It did not take much time to get her excited and angry. He convinced Mamata that she needed to become president of the state Congress before the election. He would take care this by talking to Narasimha Rao. As president, Mamata would have more authority to distribute tickets in West Bengal. In that case Pranab and Somen could be put in a corner. Mamata's intelligence level is not very high enough while her sense of jealousy is quite high. She does not have the capacity to think over matters very deeply. By using Mamata, Siddhartha was able to easily foil the plans of Pranab. By slowly inciting Mamata, he created an explosive situation in the state Congress. But Pranab and Somen were able to calm Mamata down before the candidate selection process in Delhi. They agreed to many demands of Mamata in the distribution of tickets. Pranab was able to convince the party high command that Congress should fight the election with Mamata in the forefront. When everything was almost finalized without any big

problem, CPM leaders became active in Calcutta and Siddhartha Ray and a few of his old [CPM] friends entered the field. There was possibly a joint plan between these two parties. It was seen that two close associates of Siddhartha started to incite Mamata as soon as she arrived in Calcutta. After consultations late at night with these associates of Siddhartha Ray, the row over the criminal candidates began. [passage omitted on Congress (I) criminal candidates]

Mamata Banerjee then entered into the field with full power and force against Pranab Mukherjee and Somen Mitra. Siddhartha Ray and his supporters were delighted at being able to put pressure on Somen Mitra and Pranab Mukherjee. Now, the Left Front is saying that Siddhartha Ray and few of his supporters are doing these things after an entente with CPM. They say that Siddhartha told CPM leaders; "Do not defeat me at Baharampur and let two to three of my supporters go to parliament and I will create such a chaos in the state Congress that you will not lose more than eight parliamentary seats in the state and Congress will get less than sixty seats in the state assembly." Siddhartha Ray has not yet made public that in the case of a hung parliament, CPM would support him for the position of prime minister. One senior leader of the Left Front asked me whether Mamata knowingly became a party of this plan of Siddhartha and CPM. My answer was that Mamata would not knowingly enter into any conspiracy with CPM. She is a pure anti-CPM leader. The problem is Mamata's power of understanding is poor and she is emotional and gets excited too quickly and easily. Siddhartha and his few supporters know that it is easy to drive Mamata to do anything by making her excited and angry. It may be that CPM is trying to use Mamata for their interest with an understanding with some prominent members of Congress. There is no doubt that CPM got electoral benefit from the remarks of Mamata that criminals were included in the nomination list of Congress. The unrest and chaotic condition within Congress will help CPM in the election. But I believe that if Mamata had the political wisdom to understand how much damage she would do to her party on the eve of election, she would not have done this.

Iran

Iran: Khamene'i Addresses Journalists on Nurturing Culture

LD0205124996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
0930 GMT 2 May 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Eminence Ayatollah ['Ali] Khamene'i, the great leader of the Islamic revolution, today received the press community. In his ad-

dress he said that enhancing the public's awareness and knowledge is necessary for the Islamic system's development and survival. He described the role of the press in this respect as real, effective, and constructive. [passage omitted]

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i said: The press is not a formality or a luxurious issue for the Islamic Republic of Iran: it is a fundamental issue because this system, contrary to the dictatorial and capitalist systems, is a popular one and in such a system awareness and knowledge is as necessary as air and water for society. People in the Islamic system must be given the necessary information and knowledge and they must be capable of strong analysis. To achieve this important aim, the role of a healthy press, with various tastes and methods, is unavoidable and is fundamental.

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i mentioned the role of the government and the press community in this respect. And in a reference to the government's financial and moral support to the press, he added: Those involved with the press should think very seriously about achieving these goals and planning their tasks. [passage omitted]

Criticizing the current situation of the press community in Iran, the great leader of the revolution, said: In view of our rich national culture and the collection of literature, poetry, and writings, the press, taking into account its history, has not made the desired progress.

It is hoped that more efforts will be made to consolidate and expand the quality of the press in various cultural, literary, political, and social spheres, by presenting deep and strong analysis, disseminating popular culture and knowledge, protecting the Persian language, not copying the imperfect Western methods, applying beauty in speech and delicacy in expression, displaying method and style in writing, and making professional use of photography, caricatures, and other press methods.

His eminence referred to the existence of a committed press in the country and said: The existence of various specific tastes and perceptions and logical criticism and objections to the government's apparatus, offices and ministries does not contradict the realization of the crucial duty and the mission of the press. However, clashes among the press, which can create a tense climate, must be avoided.

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i mentioned the ability of the brave nation of Iran to confront the huge problems which have been created in the country in recent centuries and said: The prospect of the country's future is hopeful and shining and one should not undermine this reality, that is, the hope of a bright

future, in the hearts of people through methods which include questioning the fundamentals of the Islamic revolution and its principles, and the publishing of special topics.

The esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution stressed that papers and periodicals which truly strive to promote the Persian language, culture, and literature should be supported.

Referring to the fact that some members of the press are pursuing a policy of weakening and inflicting blows on the Islamic system, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i pointed out: In the Islamic Republic the people are free to have different thoughts and views. And basically, under this system there is no question of challenging different thoughts but there is a difference between pursuing different thoughts and bearing a grudge and hostility [against the Islamic Republic]. Among the members of the press, there are individuals who take advantage of the open climate and freedom created by the Islamic Republic. These individuals are not trustworthy at all. Not only did they not complain under the dark suppression of the Pahlavi regime, but they used to cooperate with the tyrannical monarchy in various ways. However, in the era of the Islamic Republic, despite being free to write and to say whatever they wish, they use poetry, prose, reports, and stories to cry out that there is no freedom today. Under the blatant influence of foreigners, these individuals are in harmony with the biased propaganda of this nation's and this country's enemies to make countless allegations against the government and the responsible authorities of our system.

The esteemed leader of the Islamic revolution added: It is unfortunate that these individuals are ashamed of their country, their homeland, their national culture, and some of our historical traditions. They even, narrowly-mindedly, belittle the most glorious achievement of their social life, that is, the [Iraqi]-imposed war and the Iranian nation's epic and heroic eight-year defense against the enemy. They are so unfair to employ their pens against the selfless youth, the zealous defenders of Iran.

Referring to the point that all countries of the world, under various regimes, have to draw a line which nobody should cross, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i said: The principle of the revolution and the Islamic Republic system is our line, which must be respected. [passage omitted]

Iran: Khamene'i Praises 'Steadfastness' Against U.S.

*LD0105153596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian
1000 GMT 1 May 96*

[Speech by Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, at a gathering of teachers, workers, and educationalists in Tehran on 1 May — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

It may be that, in a society, there is work, effort, and education, but what is the motivation behind that work? In what direction is this work or education moving? Imagine, for example, the work that is being done today in the munition plants of the United States. There, too, there are workers, but the work that is being done there — whether it is the labor of a simple worker, of a skilled worker, a foreman, a sectional director, a plant director, or the main designers behind the work — all their work is at the service of warmongering. That is the purpose of their work. It is aimed at serving usurpers, such as Israel. It was aimed at, for example, the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, once upon a time.

Today, too, if the United States were not afraid of public opinion, if it were not afraid of its own internal destruction, in short, if it were not for the harnesses and barriers impeding the U.S. Administration, it would be willing to drop nuclear bombs wherever it felt like it. Murdering people is not a difficult thing for them.

Or, for example, at a university devoted to intelligence or espionage sciences for the CIA organization in the United States, too, there are teachers and students who are engaged in teaching and studying. Does that teacher have the same value as we attach to our teachers? Is a student, the product of whose efforts is... [pauses] not to defend the national interest of the United States; if it were, we would have no complaints. Let them manage their own national interests within the boundaries of their own country in a reasonable way. We have no wish to stop them from that. We are not jealous. However, that education, that studying is at the service of the most evil and the dirtiest political hands and human beings in the world, against independence-seeking movements, against independence-seeking countries, to the benefit of reactionary regimes, against progressive regimes. That is the motivation behind their work.

Look, my dear ones, I want you, the workers' community of the country and academics' community of the country, to pay attention to this point. The nature and substance of work are not important but it is the spirit of work which is important. The mere fact that an arm

moves and turns a wheel doesn't create any value, any spiritual value, any moral value. We should see why the wheel is turning, for what purpose and for whom, and what purpose the wheel will serve. [passage omitted]

One should see what is the substance of a subject, what is its purpose, and in what direction that teaching moves. This is important, my dear ones.

Today in the world, science is being taught, but in some cases it is aimed at destroying human values. Today there are people who are acquiring education in order to serve foreigners who are lying in ambush beyond the borders of the country with satanic aims. This is not an important value. Once, in our own sacred territory, a number of people were educated simply for the sake of steering Iranian society and Iran further toward corruption. This does not have any value or credit. The direction is important, the spirit is important.

Let us talk again about our own society and our own country. I want to say to you, my dear ones, the country's workers, the country's teachers: Today any scientific, cultural, or working movement that is carried out in the service of the Islamic Republic and in the service of Islamic Iran and for the reconstruction of this country and for the country's growth and development is a religious duty. That includes any task that you perform today. There are no differences between this and that factory or this and that school.

If today in Islamic Iran a teacher teaches only one word and his intention is to educate a student to serve the country — a country which is today the land of Islam and an arena for the greatness and glory of Islamic instructions — then it is a good word. If it becomes a hundred words then it becomes a hundred good words. [passage omitted]

My dear ones, today Iran, your Islamic Iran, is the focal point of the freedom and liberation of humanity. [Crowd shouts: "God is Great," "Khamene'i is the leader," "Death to America," "Death to Israel"]

Your country is the focal point of the liberation of humanity. Why? We don't have that much (?free) relations with humanity. What are we trying to do? The point is: Today the satanic and evil powers — those that you refer to as arrogant powers, for example the United States — are standing against humanity. They are standing against human values. They don't care about the lives of millions of people. You have seen that Israel killed, wounded, and made homeless tens of thousands of people in 10 to 16 days and caused much grief. It didn't touch global arrogance in the least. These are the people who, when a cat is trapped in a well in a house, mobilize their equipment

and spend money, as a deceitful act, to free the cat, which is an animal. Occasionally they pretend to be humanitarian to the extent that even we, who know them very well, sometimes doubt whether all these expressions of kindness are really true. They deceive people to that extent.

A great catastrophe occurred in front of their eyes and they did not say anything. This was not the only incident — since the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, over the past 17 years, the people of Iran have been looking at issues and evaluating world problems with their eyes open — if you look you will find hundreds of such examples.

For example, when the Americans, the Zionist apparatus of the world, the lying global powers, were supporting Iraq, you saw that the Iraqi Government used chemical bombs on Halabjah and poured chemical substances by air during daylight on the people and left their bodies like dead wood in the streets. It was an unprecedented incident. You shiver when you hear of such an incident. All the world's television channels filmed it and showed it. No one condemned Iraq. Most of the world community did not even refer to it, let alone governments.

The Islamic Republic, of course, made a lot of fuss about it in the world. A number of people, when they realized that they cannot do anything but submit to public opinion, said a few words which they would not have said otherwise. That was the same Iraq to which they referred as an awesome giant a few years later and confronted it. Because, at that time, Iraq was fighting Islamic Iran. Such are those global powers.

The threat of global sovereignty over humanity is a serious issue.

Up to some time ago, there were two powers, east and west, so there was at least some rivalry between them. In this way, they balanced each other out to some degree. Today, it is a question of absolute power. The Americans have become so impudent that they have started striding this way and that throughout the world, saying: Look, you should break off your relations with the Islamic Republic because we are not on good terms with it. Shamefulness to this degree!

Of course, the Europeans and the countries of the world slapped them in the face. They ignored them. But that is the extent of their shamefulness.

Well, these are the ones who wish to gain ever more mastery over humanity; to dig in their claws; to carry out their bullying; to express their opinion on important international events and impose their opinion on everyone. On Palestine. On Lebanon. On Bosnia. Everywhere, where something occurs, they want to be present.

express their opinion and make their presence felt. Then, they expect all governments to obey them. Weak, humble, and worthless governments actually start praising them, contrary to the interests of their own nations, encouraging them and magnifying their importance.

On the other side, who is it that is standing up to them? Which government and nation is it that does not bat an eyelid in the face of their ever-increasing threats? Which system is it that, with reliance on its people, on the strong will of its great and proud nation, has said no to all their threats and insults? Where is that place?

Do you think that we are the only people who say this? Today, all those countries, which are knowledgeable about international issues, especially issues relating to this region, admit that it is only the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran that has the courage and the strength to stand up to their ever-increasing pressure and say: No. [Crowd chants: "Death to those who oppose the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by supreme religious leader]," "Death to America," "Death to Britain," "Death to Saddam and the hypocrites," "Death to Israel."]

The fact that the Iranian nation and government say no even encourages other governments to stand firm. If you have been paying attention, you will have noticed examples of this in the course of various events. You may have noticed this in the remarks made by some of the officials of the region's countries, as reported in the news. I do not want to mention any names. You saw numerous instances of this during the recent events in Lebanon and in other situations.

In other words, your steadfastness even affects governments and nations are excited by it. Nations are emboldened. Nations derive courage from it. The spirit of fear that they have tried to inject into the bodies of nations is discarded. The steadfastness of this nation, the growth of this nation has this impact on the whole world's public opinion.

We do not listen to foreign radios for a judgement on our own situation. It is obvious that foreign radios are run by a bunch of mercenaries who have received money to write articles filled with insults from top to bottom. Well, when someone swears at someone else, does he base it on reality? For example, when he says someone's father is such and such, has he actually gone and seen that person's father? He is just swearing. They are swearing at the Islamic Republic of Iran. That is of no value.

We base our judgements on realities. This is the reality of the world today and the more this Islamic country, this independent country, this brave nation makes progress, in science, in work, in experience,

in universities, in factories, in schools — the better it becomes, the greater will become the psychological impact that I said it has on other nations.

Those who impose economic embargoes on the Islamic Republic wish to prevent the Islamic Republic from having an effect on other nations due to its industrial, technical, and scientific progress. God be praised, they cannot do so. We have made progress by the day. We thank God for this.

Today, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the officials of this government that serves the nation are working hard. Our active and dear president is working with all his might. You can see this. The people, too, are truly helping. The people's support is very valuable. Everything depends on this link between officials and the people. These efforts will bear fruit. Your work, your knowledge, your schools, your culture, your universities, your factories can affect the progress made by this country every day. That is, they can give hope to nations, humble the enemy, make the tyrants of the world and international dictators, the manifestation of which is the U.S. Administration, slip further away from their evil goals with every passing day. [passage omitted]

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: Prime Minister Signs Exchange Accord With Chinese Firm

BK0105153696 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 1 May 96

[Report by THE KATHMANDU POST reporter — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KATHMANDU, April 30 - The Industrial Information Centre has signed an agreement with Shaanxi Xianyang Printing and Dyeing Mill, Xian, China for the exchange of information, consultancy, technology and product technology information for Nepali entrepreneurs.

According to Industrial Information Centre the memorandum of understanding was signed between two parties during the recent official visit of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to People's Republic of China.

According to the agreement the Chinese party will inform Nepalese side about the information, technology and product know how required by Nepalese entrepreneurs.

Under Nepali entrepreneurs request the Chinese party will also be providing detail about the processing, technology specifications, designs, drawings, inspection report, machines and raw materials list etc.

Under demand the Chinese party has also agreed to depute qualified engineers and technicians, under the recommendation from Industrial information centre.

The agreement was signed between Ram Krishna Manandhar, executive director for Industrial Information Centre and He Zongren [name as published], director general for Shaanxi Xianyang Printing and Dyeing Mill. Industrial Information Centre (IIC) is a non-political and non-governmental organisation established in 1992 with main objective of collection, storage, dissemination of sufficient, appropriate and timely information for the establishment, growth and diversification of cottage and small business.

According to Ram Krishna Manandhar, he also signed a memorandum of understanding on behalf of Manasowar Private Limited with the same Chinese party to establish a bicycle factory in Nepal.

The two parties has agreed to discuss investments and other aspects after analyses of the Nepali bicycle market. However, it is mentioned that investment money must come within three months of the agreement on the amount of investment.

Nepal: India 'Missing Link' to Foreign Investment
BK0205113196 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU
POST in English 2 May 96

[Article by Rupesh Pradhan — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Despite liberal policies, Nepal has failed to attract significant foreign direct investment. The Indian market is the missing link. A colourful and fancy publication of the Ministry of Industry designed to woo foreign investors into the country lists nine reasons as to why Nepal provides them with great opportunities. The first one—a stable political environment—is a blatant lie. The last one—assurance of a warm and friendly people—couldn't be truer. Between these two absolute lie and truth are seven other reasons which are mostly half-truths (if you are an optimist), or half-lies (if you are not).

Looking at statistics, foreign investors do seem to be buying these reasons—whether they are true, false, or somewhere in between. In 2042 BS [Bikrami Samvat, Hindu Calendar], there were three joint-venture industries registered with a total foreign investment of Rs(rupees) 55 million. A decade later, in the first three quarters of 2052 BS, about three dozen industries registered with a proposed foreign capital inflow of more than Rs 2 billion. Expectedly, the figures started showing a significant difference in the last four years, since the government of G.P. Koirala introduced a host of lib-

eral economic policies aimed at attracting foreign direct investment.

True, 2051 BS was a disaster with less than Rs 300 million in foreign investment proposals. But that was the year of mid-term elections followed by a minority communist government which had no idea as to where it stood with regards to economics. (One of the first public confessions the UML's [United Marxist Leninist] Shadow Finance Minister Bharat Mohan Adhikari reportedly made after he became the real thing involved his realization that economics today was nothing like what it was 30 years ago when he was a student! God bless him.) All in all, however, there is some room for a breath of satisfaction.

Or is there not? Let us compare Nepal's progress report with those of two other neighbouring countries, India and Bangladesh, both of which introduced policy measures aimed at attracting foreign investment at about the same time as Nepal did. In 1994, India approved some US\$4.5 billion in foreign investment. The following year, the number doubled to US\$10 billion.

A comparison with Bangladesh is more revealing. In 1993, both Nepal and Bangladesh got proposals for foreign investment in the neighbourhood of US\$ 50 million. In 1994, while Nepal remained in the same neighbourhood, Bangladesh raced away with proposals worth about US\$ 2 billion.

Of course, it would be grossly unfair to make such unqualified comparisons between Nepal and those countries. But it would do well to look at what makes these two countries tick better than Nepal with potential investors.

Before looking at how Nepal is different from these two countries, let us first look at how it is similar. And, there are plenty of similarities. Political volatility—compounded with apparent hostility of some politicians toward foreign investors—being an important one. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which could very well form the next Indian Government, two years ago got a kick out of closing a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet in New Delhi because health-inspectors found two flies in it. The same party also cancelled—and later, reinstated—a contract with Enron to build a US\$2.6 billion power plant on grounds that the produced electricity would be too expensive. And in Bangladesh, needless to say, the concept of 'political stability' has long been as oxymoronic as that of a 'square circle'.

Political instability. Lack of reliable and adequate infrastructure to meet the growing demand. Inefficient and corrupt bureaucracy. Politically motivated strong labour.

All these pose serious hindrances to potential foreign investors in all three countries, albeit to varying degrees. Despite similar problems facing all three countries, why does Nepal fare so poorly compared to the other two?

The answer is deceptively obvious: the market. Unlike Nepal, both India and Bangladesh provide investors access to potentially huge markets for their products. At a rate of Rs 16 per minute, not many Indians will be able to afford a cellular phone; but, even if a puny fraction of the 930 million of them buys it, that would be enough to make any European country look like Lilliput.

Whereas India has a huge domestic market, Bangladesh's case is slightly different. With 120 million people, Bangladesh does have a sizeable population. But about half of it live under the poverty line; and the other half barely over it. However, the ports of Bangladesh provide access to wider markets elsewhere in the world: export oriented textiles and clothing industries are most popular among foreign investors there.

Nepal, unfortunately, neither has a sizeable domestic market, nor easy access to foreign ones. That's where the crux of the problem lies. Of course, with the current liberal policies, some foreign capital will continue to trickle in. But that would not be anywhere near enough to kindle a foreign-investment-led-growth that is so hip in emerging economies around the globe. So, are we just doomed?

Yes—unless we are willing to be aggressive trade diplomats. If big foreign investors are to set up industries here, they need to be convinced that they can freely export their products across our southern border. Current trade arrangements with India does anything but that.

For example, Nepalese products with a duty-free access to India are those with at least an 80 percent Nepalese or Indian (considered 'local') raw-material input. Nepalese goods with less than 40 percent local raw-material input are accorded the 'Most Favored Nation' treatment—a misnomer that essentially means no special favours at all. Goods with local input between 40 to 80 percent are generally guaranteed a tariff at half the normal rate.

Such trade arrangements may favour Nepalese exports of agricultural products and other primary goods to India. But they are quite hopeless as far as the exports of Nepalese manufactured goods—particularly, consumer durables—are concerned.

Therefore, if Nepal is to attract big foreign investors (and, also reduce its trade deficit with India) it has first to open up the Indian door for Nepalese manufactured products. It is nothing that will happen overnight, but Nepal has to aggressively pursue its trade interests. At

the multi-lateral level, a more comprehensive South Asian Preferential Trade Area (SAPTA) needs to be pushed for.

At the bilateral level, the minimum raw-material input provision has to be relaxed further. With the huge population of India and its rapidly growing economy, big foreign investors generally interested in tapping its appetite for manufactured consumer products and infrastructural goods (such as engineering equipment, electricity). With the level of technical know-how and the availability of raw-materials locally, an 80 percent minimum input requirement is far too unrealistic for any foreign investors to take Nepal seriously. Moreover, Nepal also needs to seek the expansion of the list of Nepalese goods allowed preferential entry into India. Currently, other than aluminum utensils, the list contains only raw-materials, primary goods, and a few agro-based non-durable products.

India being India, it would, of course, be no easy task to wedge India's door for Nepalese manufactures—especially if that involves losing some of its own potential foreign investors to Nepal. But, then, who says developing Nepal is going to be easy?

Pakistan

Pakistan: Spokesman Rejects Indian Protest Over Envoy's Interview

BK0105145196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 1 May 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has said the international community has recognized Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory and its final settlement is to be decided on the basis of right of self-determination in accordance with the UN resolutions. The spokesman said Pakistan being a party to the dispute has every right to remind India of her commitment to allow an impartial and free plebiscite in disputed territory and a reference by Pakistan to the election farce being staged by India is in no way tantamount to interference in Indian internal affairs.

The spokesman termed as unacceptable the remarks of the Indian foreign secretary protesting against an interview given by the Pakistani high commissioner in India about the so-called elections in the occupied Kashmir. He said the present movement in Kashmir was triggered off by the rigged elections of 1989 in which, according to Indian observers themselves, the turnout was less than 3 percent. Such elections can have no credibility. The spokesman recalled that Pakistan had made repeated offers of a structured and meaningful dialogue aimed at reaching a peaceful and

lasting solution of the dispute. India had shown no interest in coming to the negotiating table to address the core issue and had instead made vague public offers of unstructured and generalized talks.

Pakistan: Kashmiri Leaders Urge Boycott of Elections

BK3004135896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 30 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mir Waiz Muhammad Omar Farooq, has reiterated his demand for tripartite talks to resolve the longstanding Kashmir issue, reports our special correspondent in New Delhi, Ghulam Nabi Khayal:

[Begin recording] All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders have asked the people and all the government employees in Jammu and Kashmir state to stay away from the coming parliamentary elections. In a resolution endorsed at the mammoth 'Id [Muslim festival] congregation at Idgah in Srinagar, the Hurriyat Conference reiterated that elections were no solution to the Kashmir problem and were also no substitute to the right of self-determination conceded to the people of Kashmir by the United Nations. The resolution appealed to the democratic states all over the world that they should also raise their voice to express their solidarity for the Kashmiris in their freedom struggle. The chairman of the Conference, Mir Waiz Omar Farooq, said in his address that the Indian Government should adopt a realistic policy on Kashmir so that the dispute is resolved amicably through tripartite talks between the people of Kashmir, India, and Pakistan. He said that the core issue of Kashmir was the only deterrent to the establishment of peace and stability in this region.

Ghulam Nabi Khayal, PTV News, New Delhi. [end recording]

Meanwhile, Indian troops did not slacken their brutal oppressions even on the sacred occasion of 'Id and at least 20 people have been killed during the past 24 hours. Mujahideen retaliated by attacking troops in Kupwara District killing four of them. The troops had torched four houses in the area in which three youths were burnt alive. Mujahideen also clashed with troops in Rajouri earlier, but details of losses were not available. In Hindwara area, two soldiers were killed and two mujahideen martyred in an encounter. Clashes have also been reported from Baramulla, Badgam, and Anantnag-Islamabad areas.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Text of President's May Day Message

BK0105024096 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 1 May 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] This year's May Day is held at a time when an environment is being created to spurn racialism and communalism and create unity among Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities in the North East and South once again with true class consciousness, says President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga in her May Day message.

"The political proposals aimed at ending the war as soon as possible are the avenues for implementing this theme. The atmosphere of peace created through the implementation of these proposals will enable the working class to further stabilise their rights and privileges for enjoying a better standard of living and clear the way for ushering prosperity for people of Sri Lanka as a whole," the President has added.

Following is the full text of the President's message:

"Some 4.5 million workers of Sri Lanka join the billions of their working class brethren the world over to celebrate yet another May Day today.

"It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to offer my warm felicitations to the working class of the world on this day of unique significance to them.

"The working class in this country can lay claim to a proud history of May Day commemoration going as far back as 1931. However, the May Day was declared a public holiday here only in 1956 under the government of the late Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike.

"Many are the rights won by the working class through their relentless heroic struggles. The rights the workers enjoy today are nothing but the fruits of their blood and sweat shed for the cause. But a death blow was dealt to these rights after 1977. It is a fact that cannot be hidden. There is no need to recall in this context numerous instances where the workers were subjected to suppression and their rights usurped during the 17 year UNP [United National Party] regime. The blemish of worker suppression resorted to by the previous regime is now part of history.

"The restoration of the lost rights of the workers was one of the tasks that was entrusted to the People's Alliance government that took office just 19 months ago. We have successfully accomplished this task. The nation as a whole, in fact, are enjoying their democratic

rights today. We have created an atmosphere where the working class is able to live a life free from nagging fear and suspicion. Further, laws are now being enacted to secure and consolidate the rights of workers and trade unions.

"However, I do not say that all problems that the workers had been facing have already been solved. We should lose no time in addressing the pressing problem of unemployment. Steps have already been taken to contain inflation to bring down the living costs. The report on the revision of salaries of public servants has now been received and measures are now being taken to implement its recommendations.

"It is by building a prosperous Sri Lanka through an economic development program that we can achieve these objectives successfully. For this the most essential pre-requisite is peace.

"It is the working class of this country who always boldly supported the objective of ending the war early as possible and fostering peace. It is the working class who always stood up against racism, communalism and racial inequality. It was the result of the constant influence they derived by joining and working in unison with the national and international progressive movement.

This year's May Day is held at a time when an environment is being created to spurn racism and communalism and create unity among Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities in the North East and South once again with true class consciousness.

Tamils in the north are arriving in their villages once again after liberating themselves from LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) clutches. They are now ready to re-start a free and democratic life.

"When this historic process is getting manifested it is the working class which should form the bridge for building links between the Tamils and Sinhalese in the North and South.

The prime responsibility of the working class in this context is to create a suitable environment for communal amity. This can be done by taking steps to implement the devolution proposals as soon as possible.

It is through such a process that we can unite the working class of Sri Lanka now divided among the North and South as a single entity.

"Fostering peace through unity of Sinhala and Tamil people" should be the theme of this year's May Day.

The political proposals for concluding the war as soon as possible is the avenue for implementing this theme.

The atmosphere of peace created through the implementation of these proposals will enable the working class to further stabilise their rights and privileges for enjoying a better standard of living and clear the way for ushering in prosperity for people of Sri Lanka as a whole.

"It is through this process that we can find lasting solutions for the problems of poverty and unemployment.

"Let us free ourselves from outmode principles and notions and create new solutions to build peace which is so necessary for ushering national prosperity.

"May we be blessed with intelligence, compassion, strength and sincerity for achieving this objective." [passage omitted]

Sri Lanka: President Stresses Ending War in Speech at May Day Rally

BK0205015396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
2 May 96

[Report by Pramod de Silva — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga on Wednesday [1 May] urged the public to fully cooperate with the government to bring an end to the protracted North-East war, expressing the hope that the government would be able to achieve this objective in six months' time.

"This is a time to think what we can do for the country and not what the country can do for us. This is a time to restrain ourselves from making demands of various kinds and concentrate our energies on solving the North-East conflict," President Kumaratunga told the People's Alliance May Day Rally at Town Hall grounds, Colombo.

She described the return of nearly 250,000 displaced civilians to the government-controlled Valikamam region of the Jaffna peninsula as the "beginning of the LTTE's [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] defeat". It is also a clear indication that the people in Jaffna have rejected the LTTE.

"The civilians have told our security forces personnel in no uncertain terms that they abhor war. All they seek is some form of devolution of power which will enable them to live in peace," she said, adding that ending the war would release additional funds for development and employment generation.

The president said the solution to the ethnic conflict lies in addressing the genuine grievances of the Tamil people. An overwhelming majority of people from all communities were fully supportive of the government's peace initiatives.

Unlike in the past, the present government has been able to achieve real military victories in only seven months.

She reminded the gathering that the government commenced many projects for public welfare despite spending a staggering Rs. [rupees] 39,000 million for the war.

"We have tried to arrest the rising cost of living in spite of the war. Subsidies have been granted for flour and fertilizer. Nearly 250,000 persons have secured employment here and abroad. Many infrastructure projects are also underway".

She said the Lankan labour force was highly disciplined and skilled. However, certain foreign investors have formed an incorrect opinion on the local labour force due to canards spread by certain elements including the main opposition party. "I was able to allay these fears when I addressed investors in China last week," she added.

The government had granted freedom for workers to agitate for their rights. People could live without fear and suspicion. Corruption is being wiped out.

"There are shortcomings in our work as we are only human. We have to do more. For that, we need your support and encouragement. We must make certain sacrifices to usher in a golden era".

She expressed her gratitude to the people for ending 17 years of destructive rule and electing a truly people's government which strives to fulfill the aspirations of the masses.

She regretted that processions could not be allowed due to security reasons as protecting civilian life and property was a top priority for the government.

Labour and Vocational Training Minister Mahinda Rajapakse and Media, Tourism and Aviation Minister Dharmasiri Senanayake also spoke.

Sri Lanka: Outgoing Army Commander Speaks at Farewell Function

BK0105024596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
1 May 96

[Report by Paneetha Ameresekere — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lieutenant General Rohan de S Daluwatte, who takes over the army command from Gerry de Silva, told the "Daily News", that there won't be any changes in the army, other than routine transfers and appointments, in that institution.

He said this at a farewell function accorded to general Gerry de Silva at army headquarters yesterday. General

de Silva is soon due to take up a diplomatic appointment abroad.

General de Silva in his farewell address said that in his recent overseas tour, he was able to get assistance from Britain, Israel and other countries, to obtain training for the army's junior officers, special forces and the army's air mobile wing.

"They will be coming in the near future to train our forces", he said. "The USA has already helped us to establish a training centre for our junior officers," he added.

The general said that he was appointed army commander in January 1994. "In my address then, I said that one of the changes required to make the army more professional, was to convert the term "I" to "we". Looking back, I'm happy to say that other than a few exceptions, we have all worked towards that objective, which has made the army a much better institution compared to what it was," he said.

"We also had the dubious reputation of being an undisciplined force, having been responsible for a number of human rights offences", the general said. "However during the past 28 months we have come a long way, with the world acknowledging that we are an army, which pays special attention to human rights," he said.

"We come and go, but the institution goes on, you have to do your best to safeguard the good name of the institution", he advised the large number of senior army officers who attended yesterday's farewell function.

General de Silva acknowledged that the crowning success of his command was the successful Riviresa 2 military operation. After the debacles of Kilaly and Pooneryn at that time, the morale of the army and the people were low, and it was thought that the army was a unit which could not meet its responsibilities.

"However today it's a reorganised and trained army. I'm leaving you with a better army where command is paramount," General de Silva told the officers.

"This was achieved by improving the individual skills of the soldier, bolstering the junior leadership, from platoon commander and downwards, which bears the main brunt in an attack. If they are not properly trained, it would be a blow to having a combat efficient army, he said. The third part of the training which the army concentrated in improving under his command was the development of the night and jungle fighting capabilities of the troops.

The results of this training coupled with the inspired leadership of the field commanders, from lieutenant general Daluwatte downwards, were clearly seen in the

army's Riviresa 1 & 2 operations, and the decisive defeats inflicted on the enemy, in the abortive LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] attacks at Welio-Oya, and the army's counter-attacks in operation "Thunderstrike", at Achchuveli, Puttur and at Ponnalikadduwan, when the terrorists launched abortive attacks on the army's FDLs [forward defense lines].

Putting aside your self interests, it is up to you to go from strength to strength in serving the institution", he told the officers.

"I have known lieutenant general Daluwatte for 35 years, in my 36 years of service in the army", general de Silva said. We were together as cadets at Sandhurst and have pleasant memories of Dublin, where we were together on vacation.

Thanking the support services (the navy, airforce and the police), the general in conclusion wishing the army Godspeed said that he was confident that the army would live up to its highest traditions, under lieutenant general Daluwatte's command

Meanwhile, General de Silva in an interview with Lankapuwath, said that President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga's government, had provided the army all the necessary manpower and logistical support to retake the Jaffna peninsula in operations Riviresa 1 and 2, with strong support from the navy and the airforce.

He further told the news agency that the government had provided new tanks, armour, artillery, new gun boats, fighter aircraft, helicopter gunships and other specialist equipment, which has wreaked havoc on the LTTE.

The success of troops engaged in operation Riviresa 2, where there were no human rights violations, was the main reason for hundreds of thousands of civilians returning to their homes in areas liberated by the security forces, despite orders to the contrary by the LTTE high command, the general added.

"Foreign governments, particularly in the west, which had earlier expressed concern over human rights abuse by the army, are now commending the army for observing human rights, and protecting civilians," the general said in conclusion.

Sri Lanka: New Army Commander Views Success of Military Offensives

BK0205015596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
2 May 96

[Report by Paneetha Ameresekere — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lieutenant General Rohan de S. Daluwatte who on Wednesday [1 May] assumed duties as the country's new army commander told journalists that around two lakhs of civilians had already returned to the areas in the Jaffna peninsula liberated by the security forces by Riviresa 1 and 2 operations.

"The stream of humanity flooding into the liberated areas is still continuing. Rehabilitation work has also begun," he said.

The new army commander said that only the Vadamarachchi area in the peninsula remains to be liberated. "A couple of hundred terrorists have been holed up in Vadamarachchi, with their escape route through Thennamarachchi being effectively cut off with the clearing of that territory," he said. The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadre strength has been further decimated from 16,000 to 8,000, he added.

The liberation of the Valikamam and the Thennamarachchi sectors of the peninsula is part of a larger plan by the security forces to free other areas of the country such as Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, as well as certain parts of the East, where the rebels continue to operate, he said.

Lieutenant General Daluwatte who earlier addressed a large number of officers who were present to welcome him at army headquarters on Wednesday said that among the many victories inflicted on the enemy by the security forces in their thirteen year old campaign against the terrorists, Operations Riviresa 1 & 2 had by far been the most spectacular.

"We are mindful of the scores of security forces who have sacrificed their lives, and hundreds of others who have been permanently maimed, so that the country could have a better tomorrow", he said.

Though Sri Lanka has a written history of 2,500 years, it has not been based on war, he said. Nevertheless it has a rich military tradition, which is in harmony with the country's religious beliefs, he added.

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